

**NURTURING CITIZENS:**  
**An Enquiry into Citizenship and Attachment Theory**

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## **STATEMENT OF SOURCES**

I declare that this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, my own original work except as acknowledged in the text and that the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree or diploma at this or any other university or institution.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murdoch Colin MacKenzie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the connections between parenting styles and the concepts of citizenship and attempts to discover whether a secure attachment of the infant to the parent is the foundation for the development of qualities required in a 'good' citizen.

I survey the functions of citizenship in a democracy and review the literature to ascertain that a 'good' citizen is marked by the qualities of a sense of belonging, an ability to trust others, responsibility, respect and concern for others, cooperativeness, tolerance and fairness.

I then review the research literature dealing with the effects of secure attachment on the developing person to argue that many of the qualities correlated with secure attachment are the same as those previously identified as valuable in a 'good' citizen.

Some of the criticisms of this thesis have been anticipated and addressed. These include controversies regarding the contribution of genetic inheritance, of temperament, and of factors other than the parents.

I continue my argument by suggesting that an added requirement for 'good' citizenship is a set of moral values that are also learnt within the context of family life and note that there is some evidence to argue that a secure infant more readily incorporates parental values.

Finally I suggest possibilities for further research to test this thesis and discuss the effects on social policy, education and clinical work if the thesis is accepted.

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## **PART 1**

In which the thesis is summarised and the 'good' citizen defined.

## CHAPTER 1. SPECIFYING THE QUESTION

### *1.1. Introduction*

This thesis is an exploration of a possible link between the kind or style of attachment a baby makes with its parents and the kind of citizen that baby becomes. It is an enquiry into the possibility that by promoting particular child rearing practices there could be generated a greater number of 'good' citizens within Australian society. These questions, which I will explain in more detail later, are the specific questions I bring to this research, however they are part of broader questions which include: Is there a link between styles of parenting and the subsequent behaviour of adults?; and Can parenting influence the personal qualities of children as they grow into adult citizens? In this thesis the term 'parent' is used to cover all adults who have a long term responsibility for the care and nurturance of a child.

In this introduction I will examine these questions by defining the boundaries, laying out my argument and reviewing what some other authors have done to research the potential links between parenting and citizenship. I shall begin by declaring the starting point from which this thesis springs. I am a retired medical practitioner after having worked in Child Psychiatry for 25 years. Child Psychiatry is dominated by two basic, and at times conflicting, foundations - psycho-analysis theory and child development theories. The former provides a theory of the unconscious, of the irrational and of the intimate interpersonal, while the latter is more empirically-based and therefore more 'scientific'. Child development has become an ever expanding body of knowledge that was initially informed by psycho-analysis but in its efforts to remain a science has become increasingly separated from its roots. Genetic studies, neuropsychology, and evolutionary psychology are becoming the more important contributors to advances in child development.

Child Psychiatry has, from the start, utilized social workers with the result that a social and contextual dimension has developed within the discipline. Out of this dimension family therapy grew. I used the insights and assumptions of family therapy theories in my daily work. These insights include general systems theory, theories of family structure and process that draw on, among other ideas, group dynamics, and the power of family history, its myths, rituals and stories. Various attempts have been made to

graft family therapy and child development theories. A developmental systems theory seems to me to be the most useful and inclusive of these attempts. It is the presumptions that this theory uses that are the underpinnings of this paper. These assumptions will be clarified in Chapter 2.

A more recent understanding within the child psychiatric field is the awareness that we cannot escape our prejudices and unconscious motivations in our work. Psycho-analysis recognized this difficulty and insisted on personal analysis for its practitioners but this understanding became submerged in the discipline of Child Psychiatry's drive to be recognized as a scientific endeavour. Now we have relearnt that none of us can transcend the subjectivity of our lives. This insight adds complexity and relativity to any statement. It forms a veil of tentativeness over the whole paper. It adds to the requirement to make known my particular vantage point.

As well as a professional I am a husband, father, grandfather and citizen. I am a migrant to Australia with a migrant's divided loyalties and belongings. As migrants we have to find a place and an identity for ourselves. Equally important for the background to this paper is the struggle I have felt as I tried to balance my responsibilities as a citizen with those of a time-consuming family and professional life. I have seen the duty of a citizen as that of working towards a better society ( whatever that may mean) and so I have tried to "do my duty to God and the King" to quote the Scout promise I made as a child. I have reinterpreted "King" to mean Australia and God to include the world. My belief that we need a better society, both within Australia and throughout the world has been a major motivating factor in writing this thesis.

From these beginnings I have, in the course of writing this paper, travelled over territory that is new to me. I have dipped into the rich, extensive literature on sociology as well as into the fields of social history, evolutionary and anthropological psychology and even moral philosophy. Each of these, as well as other branches of the social sciences and humanities, has something to contribute to the fundamental questions I have posed, but I am neither competent nor widely read enough to confidently apply this stock of insights and propositions to my current argument. There is a danger that too superficial an understanding results in false conclusions. I trust that these dangers have been minimized through the supervision I have received and the discussions I have held with other more competent practitioners.

When I considered the question of how to increase the number of ‘good’ citizens within Australian society I brought my knowledge of attachment theory to bear and wondered if the developmental psychological theory of attachment could say something of value to our society? In particular, can a secure attachment in infancy contribute towards the development of ‘good’ citizens? It is this latter question that this paper addresses.

### **1.2. Some Functions of Parenting and a Better Society**

Most parents want and hope for the best for their children, usually this has meant that they would like their children to grow into healthy adults who can take their place in society. Frequently, they want them to be respected by others so that as parents they can be proud of them. Democratic states such as Australia, have similar goals for their citizens. Their policies encourage parents and teachers to guide children’s development towards gainful employment and a healthy lifestyle. Psychological and sociological child development research has, on the whole, accepted these aims by concentrating on preventing and treating social pathology, and by promoting mental health and individual well-being. Education, from kindergarten to university, under economic and political pressures, has shifted from encouraging the development of the whole person to the teaching of marketable skills.

On the other hand, there are those who recognize the potential for children to mature into something more. In the forward to the *Handbook of Parenting* Zigler notes that “Parenting has been described as the most challenging and complex task of adulthood. It can also be argued that there is no undertaking that is more important to the life of the human community. Yet that community rarely offers adequate guidance, support or preparation for parenthood...” [ 1995, pxi]. He seems to be agreeing that parenting is a vital source of citizens who can help the community to function well but that this same community does little to foster the importance of parenting.

John Bowlby was a child psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and researcher in child development. His theories and ideas will figure prominently in this paper. In 1946 he wrote an article titled *Psychology and Democracy* in which he maintained that “..a cooperative, peaceful and non-persecutory society demands that personal and social relationships within it be based on the principles of freedom and democracy.”[p62] In the immediate aftermath of the atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he considered “..the necessity of humanity learning how to live together peacefully and

cooperatively has never been greater.” [p61] Bowlby advocated the study of “social and psychological principles” in order to apply them to society. He ended his paper with the thought that “The hope for the future lies in a far more profound understanding of the nature of the emotional forces involved and in the scientific social techniques for modifying them.”[p76]

There is a long history of attempts to bring to bear on child rearing the knowledge of the time in the hope that a better society will ensue. Freud, for example, hoped to find an approach that would allow people to live together in a satisfactory way [1930], while thinkers and philosophers from Plato [for example see French, 1996] onwards have suggested ways to promote a better society often through the training and education of its youth. Parents, teachers and the state can all be involved in this endeavour.

States have used this belief in the malleability of the child for ideological ends. Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia and the Israeli kibbutz are examples but present day Western democracy is not immune from indoctrinating their children through our encouragement of consumerism, competition and individuality in line with capitalist principles. Penelope Leach, a child psychologist and broadcaster, in her book *Children First* introduced it with the statement that “This book argues that our society is inimical to children, and has therefore devalued parents to such an extent that individual good parenting is not only exceedingly difficult but, ultimately, insufficient.” [1994, pxiii] It is clear that the state cannot be the arbiter of what constitutes a ‘good’ citizen nor can it be relied upon to develop and maintain the appropriate policies to benefit human kind. People as citizens must accept that responsibility.

Bowlby’s hopes from the 1940s that science could inform child rearing to benefit society have not been fulfilled. We continue to live in a world where the future is problematic. Climate change, environmental degradation, unsustainable population growth and resource usage, increasing disparities between the rich and poor, the ethical dilemmas of genetics and the breakdown of societies into ethnic, religious and racial groups are some of the issues we face. Furthermore many social commentators believe that democracy itself is under threat [e.g. Hobsbawm, 1994; Massam, 1996; Theobald, 1999]. Cynicism, apathy and hedonism are said to be sapping the core of social cohesion, diminishing social capital, and weakening society’s moral standards [e.g. Brown, 1997; Fukuyama, 1999; Giddens, 1991; Lasch, 1977; Norton, 1997]. It remains



sensible to consider if psychology and sociology can assist us to create societies that are better able to resolve these challenges. Bowlby's presumption, that the natures of societies are predicated on the personal and social relationships of individual citizens remains appropriate and the possibility that childrearing has a bearing on the way these citizens relate is worth investigating.

This thesis will explore the possibility that some psychologically identified processes can assist in that endeavour. Child development is complex and multifactorial, yet, as noted by Richardson:

“Even though a vast number of factors have been involved in the interactions from which collective order emerged., it is often the case that a small number (sometimes one) of the variables or relations are particularly relevant in affecting the collective variable.” [2000, p78]

In other words it may be that a few factors are strong determinants of developmental outcomes. In the light of this concept I will concentrate on a few aspects of child development that seem to me to be strong determinants with attachment being the major factor I will consider.

The argument that attachment style is one of the major factors that determines the development of the future adult constitutes the bulk of this thesis. To develop and sustain this argument I analyse and utilize some of the vast research literature on attachment theory. In other words the thesis is based on the use of secondary sources. The question may be asked at this stage as to why of all the factors affecting a child's development I have chosen to focus on attachment. While the whole thesis is the answer to this question it may be useful at this stage to point to some of the literature that hypothesizes a similar connection. The next section will present some to justify my question.

### ***1.3. Some Pertinent Literature***

The idea that attachment theory can be influential in determining the behaviour and attitudes of citizens is not new, nor is the hope that changing parenting practices will improve society. Clearly Bowlby had some similar hopes in mind when he formulated his theory of attachment. He writes that “We have created a topsy turvey world...the society we live in is...in evolutionary terms...a very peculiar one. There is a great danger that we shall adopt mistaken norms.” [1988, p200] Other researchers in the same

tradition agree that parents socialize their children for their particular culture. Van IJzendoorn and Tavecchio for example note that “Cultures demand different levels of competence of their members, and in socializing the individuals, an attempt is made to develop culturally functional characteristics and capacities. Different cultures provide their younger generations with different adaptive tools..” [1987, p19]. Bowlby believed that the mother-infant relationship was fundamental to the development of the child and a “good enough” one (to use Winnicott’s phrase) protects the child from future mental and social problems. Bowlby goes on to say that “This concept of the secure personal base, from which a child, an adolescent, or an adult goes out to explore and to which he returns from time to time, is one I have come to regard as crucial for an understanding of how an emotionally stable person develops and functions *all through his life*.” [1988,p46, his italics] According to Weissberg “Many agree that early learning involves broad attachments, loyalties and identifications which are enduring though not immune to change.. it acts as a filter for considerable further learning.” [1974]

It is interesting to note the various uses of the parent in discussing the ‘homeland’ for instance- “mother-tongue; patriot; fatherland; in Japanese, family-state [kazoku kokka]; or as the Italian term “la madre patria” would have it, the mother-fatherland” [James,1996]. Feshbach explored “the proposition that the attachment displayed toward one’s nation or culture bears fundamental similarities to the attachment displayed by the young child to his parents” [1991, p207-226]. Unfortunately, Feshbach uses a different concept of attachment from the one I intend to use and his research methodology is dubious. Feshbach agrees and states that his findings are only tentative, nevertheless the findings are of interest and I will return to them at a later stage. He is the first author I have found to seriously consider the idea that citizenship and attachment may be linked and to begin some research into it.

Hopf and Hopf [1997] using attachment theory, found that of 30 extreme right wing youths, 23 could be classified as dismissing and non-secure while, in contrast, 10 of 19 non right wing subjects were securely attached [in Byng-Hall, 2002]. This example further illustrates the possibility that attachment theory may be influential in adult political behaviour, obviously an important ingredient of citizenship.

In 1996 a book appeared titled *The Politics of Attachment: Towards a secure society*. The various contributors to the book “..share a common conviction that we all have a

powerful need to belong, to be attached to people, places, and projects and that social and political processes must reflect that.” [Kraemer & Roberts,1996, Blurb on back cover] This conviction that there are biological human needs including attachment and belonging needs, underpins my concerns as well, however I take this idea a step further. Having already pointed to the concern that social and political processes do not in fact reflect these needs, I suggest that parenting for secure attachment may assist society to itself change.

Peter Marris, in *The Politics of Uncertainty* [1996], draws a portrait of the growing uncertainties and insecurities of western societies. This point is amplified by Beck who states that “We live in an uninsured society...noone can opt out.” [in Elliott,1996] In other words, as Turner puts it, there is “..an erosion of citizenship.” [2001] Furedi argued that the West is becoming risk-averse, exaggerating the risks and panicking irrationally especially over dangers to children and to health [1997]. There are many other articles and books that describe a deep malaise within our society. For instance Turner say that “Citizenship, once inscribed in the institutions of the welfare state, is a buffer against the vagaries of the market place and the inequalities of the class system..” [1993]. Saunders agrees that “The old certainties have disappeared and the future is always to a greater or lesser extent threatening. Ontological security in the modern world is inherently fragile.” [1995, p85] He continues by stating that it is increasingly “..like a society in which people are unwilling or unable to make binding and lasting emotional commitments to one another” [p89]. Although Saunders does not suggest a method to resolve this, it is clear that he, too, considers that citizens with those attributes would benefit society. Hindess suggests that “Citizens are, in effect, officers of their community. The community therefore has a legitimate interest in ensuring that they develop the appropriate personal qualities and attributes.” [in Turner, 1993, p28]

Marshall is regarded by many as an important theorist of citizenship. In 1964 he wrote that “The education of children has a direct bearing on citizenship, and where the State guarantees that all children shall be educated, it has the requirements and nature of citizenship definitely in mind. It is trying to stimulate the growth of citizens in the making.” [1964, p81] Further on he suggests that “The duty to improve and civilize oneself is therefore, a social duty, not merely a personal one, because the social health

depends upon the civilization of its members” [p82]. No doubt he would have included parents as educators of their children.

These and other authors stress how modern societies fail to meet the needs of their citizens. From this understanding of our present society I suggest we need citizens who can guide society towards a more stable future designed to meet the needs of people rather than the needs of the marketplace and the economy, that is, we need citizens with special qualities.

Some of the above authors have wondered if attachment theory could be linked to the well-being and functioning of adults. Some have gone a step further to consider that a secure attachment might also lead to a different society. Others are concerned that our present society is dysfunctional. They suggest that society needs a different kind of citizen. In this thesis I am exploring the idea that these two concepts can be connected. Parenting, especially the attachment relationship constructed between the parent and child, may be a vital factor in this regard.

An excellent example that demonstrates how changes in parenting can be connected with changes in adult society concerns the changes wrought in Spartan society and childrearing. As a result of heavy losses of men in Sparta’s continual warfare, the remaining citizens were overextended. Childrearing was turned over to nurses who “..because they were not products of the Spartan system, could not transmit successfully Spartan values to their young charges.... (when Sparta) tried to reform, to return to the former hard discipline of earlier times. She failed, in a significant part, because the habits of parenting had so dramatically changed.” [French,1996, p277] Here can be seen the importance in the transmission of values from adult caregivers to their child charges. I will in the course of this thesis argue that the style of attachment between the parent and child is an important factor in the way values are transmitted.

An earlier attempt to recognize the needs of society for responsible citizens is that by Hearn. He states that the “..group organization most conducive to the attainment of optimum need satisfaction is... the democratic-participatory pattern” and goes on to add:

“The behaviour demanded of anyone who wishes to function in such a group will require in addition to the assumption of responsibility.. an active concern for others as well as, and perhaps before, his own welfare. This kind of person is very rare.... our greatest hope for developing such persons is to provide, in infancy and early childhood, conditions in which the individual

will feel accepted and secure. This is the firm base upon which a mature adult can develop.” [1951, p70]

Here again is the call for the nurturance of ‘good’ citizens by parents, in particular a sense of felt security that is provided by a secure attachment.

Citizenship is, according to Thompson “..the present and future capacity for influencing politics” therefore it involves an active involvement in political life [1970, p2]. All individuals are, therefore, to engage in citizenship activities but for them to be ‘good’ ethically responsible citizens a particular approach to their upbringing may be required as the previous authors have suggested.

Finally, an article published in late 2002 by Edwards suggests that a democratic state “..needs an independent citizenry...who can live together cooperatively with an eye toward what benefits the whole as well as the self.” Edwards presents a model of parenting that can be utilized to help children develop this interdependence. She claims that a secure attachment between the infant and the caregiver sets “..the stage for the development of self-striving and a sense of mastery”, and both affect regulation and empathy.

This review has found literature which discerns linkages between parenting and citizenship, between the attributes of citizens and their social relations, between these and the functioning of that particular society. It has pointed to the importance of a sense of security in human functioning in contrast to the increasing insecurity of our world. The evidence presented indicates the value of citizenship and gives tantalizing suggestions that attachment theory may be worth exploring as a factor in the development of citizenship. The link then, that I want to explore is that between parenting that promotes a secure infant attachment and the active responsible citizen mentioned by Hearn.

### **1.4. Boundaries**

The question of whether a a secure attachment in infancy can contribute to the development of a ‘good’ citizen requires some boundaries if it is to be encompassed within this thesis. I have, therefore, limited the scope of the question. Firstly, I am confining the question to Western Democratic states and, where possible, to the Australian context. Much of the research on which my argument is based originates in

the USA, UK, or Europe, that is, similar democratic societies to that of Australia. Secondly, I will limit the discussion about what constitutes a 'good' citizen to surveying a range of other authors' opinions, extracting the common and important qualities to use as a yardstick against which to form a definition. Finally I intend to argue my case through the review of the work of other researchers rather than conducting field research myself.

### **1.5. Argument**

In order to determine the relationship between secure attachment in infancy and the development of 'good' citizens my argument is established along the following lines:

- That infant attachment is a fundamental aspect of development, that is, it is a strong determinant.
- That the way infants cope with this survival requirement (attaching oneself to a care giving adult) in the particular situation into which they are born provide standards by which future relationships are dealt with and judged. Even though these standards may be modified and the repertoire of behaviours the individual can utilize expands, and even though the outcome in a particular case cannot be predicted, tendencies can be observed that show a moderate degree of stability from infancy onwards of the style people use in their relationships. It is, therefore, possible for statistical probabilities to be of value when considering whole social groups.
- That while 'attachment' styles vary widely there are sufficient regularities to classify them into 3-4 groupings. Each group has a stability across time and initially begins to 'jell' in the patterns of the infant-parent relationships.
- That some styles are more likely to be present in individuals who function well in their lives. They can 'absorb more shocks' than others. The "secure" or "balanced" style appears to be the most resilient.
- That people who feel they have a safe and secure base both within themselves and within their social network are freer to investigate their world. They consider the needs of others as well as themselves and develop creative solutions to the physical and social problems they encounter.

- That people displaying this robust secure style will have a greater ability to handle changing situations, will be more able to explore these situations and guide the future towards appropriate outcomes and will be more able to take into consideration the welfare of others and take into account the wider perspective.
- While attachment is a firm foundation to the development of a fully functional adult, it is, on its own, insufficient to ensure with any confidence the development of a 'good' citizen. Two further factors are important:
  - A family climate with appropriate moral and ethical standards; and
  - A set of world views shared by the family that enable rational, autonomous and reflective action in the social sphere.
- The attributes of a 'good' citizen will be considered and compared with those found in the previous discussion.
- Finally the link between the attachment and citizenship will be spelt out.

If my argument can be supported and sustained two supplementary questions arise.

1. What are the factors that contribute to the development and maintenance of a secure attachment style? This question is important if we as a society want to increase the proportion of securely attached people within our society. The arguments around this question include that there are multiple factors that contribute to this pattern including the infants' temperament, the parents personality and their child-rearing beliefs and practices. These beliefs and practices are strongly influenced by parents' personal histories and the current cultural practices and beliefs. Cultural patterns then, are important factors in the development of attachment relationships between infants and their parents. Sociology as well as psychology has a bearing on the issue.
2. Is there a connection or correlation between the different proportions of securely attached and insecurely attached people within a given society and the way that society functions and is governed? The arguments around this question include:
  - That relationships serve multiple purposes, one of which is people's need for support in times of trouble and for a sense of the security of the familiar and predictable as an anchor in their lives. These "attachment" requirements are met both in moderately long-term relationships and in times of crisis when fellow victims and/or authority figures are utilized in the short-term (for example, the

recent bush fires in NSW and ACT, the New Yorkers after the terrorist attacks and Londoners during the blitz, etc., when communities band together for support or in the therapy room, hospital or group situation when an authority figure becomes the leader on whom people depend).

- That the world has always been an unpredictable, risky place. For this reason people have banded together to improve their chances of survival. Society has evolved with certain structures or regularities that provide a measure of predictability and a measure of support to the inhabitants.
- That each person constructs an attachment style that best fits their particular situation in their specific society and this, along with the society's child-rearing beliefs, guides their relationship with their children. So, in a circular fashion, children grow up with an attachment style that fits their society's structures (regularities).
- That societies will differ as to the most prominent attachment style that fits their particular structure (regularities).
- That when societies undergo rapid change, that is, when their structures and regularities are unstable and changing, people will feel more insecure and their habitual style to deal with their insecurity may be severely tested.

The hypothesis laid out in this second point is a huge question that I will only lightly touch on in the course of this paper. I make more detailed reference to it in a separate article [MacKenzie,2002].

In essence my argument concludes that if we can, in Australia, promote the opportunities for parents and infants to achieve a secure attachment, and if this attachment style can be sustained throughout the primary years, we may be able to increase the number of individuals in society who can function as ethically responsible citizens to meet the challenges of the future.

### **1.6. Summary**

The purpose of this chapter is to set the agenda for the rest of the thesis. The question of a possible connection between attachment theory and citizenship will be argued over the next nine chapters.



Chapter 2. Defines the methods I will use to argue the case that there are theoretical reasons to suppose that a connection exists between attachment in infancy and later citizenship behaviours. I also define some of the terms I use.

Chapter 3. Continues by defining citizenship as a legal entity, a relationship, a role and an attitude. It concludes by arguing that the attributes of a 'good' citizen include a sense of belonging, a willingness to trust, a readiness to treat others with respect, a sense of responsibility and an urge to participate in deciding the nation's future.

Chapter 4. Furthers the discussion of citizenship to continue the argument that 'good' citizens are defined by the above characteristics and are further distinguished by their self-esteem, empathy, cooperativeness and acceptance of a need for self-reflection. Particularly, that a balance between the various virtues is important.

Chapter 5. Begins the exploration of attachment theory by providing an explanation of its main components.

Chapter 6. I develop the argument that early childhood experiences are important factors in the later development of the child.

Chapter 7. Reviews the literature on the effects of secure attachment on the future development of a person's social behaviour out of which I argue that a secure attachment can lead to a socially competent person who is empathic, realistic, creative and autonomous with a capacity for self-reflection.

Chapter 8. Deals with a child's moral development and its links with attachment. I argue that securely attached children are more easily socialized to the moral standards of their parents but are also able to alter their values in the light of later understandings.

Chapter 9. Brings the socio-cultural context into the picture to argue that family life is not divorced from its influence and that the world views of the parents will substantially influence those of their children. Again the links to attachment are uncovered to argue that attachment style is a factor in this process.

Chapter 10. Concludes the thesis by comparing the features of adult behaviour that may be influenced by one's attachment style and the behaviour of citizens to show that there is substantial agreement between them. A theoretical connection between secure attachment and 'good' citizenship has been made. This tentative hypothesis needs to be

researched and suggestions are made about a way forward and the social policy that might flow from this hypothesis is discussed. These latter issues will be presented in Chapter 11.

## **CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY**

### ***2.1. Introduction***

In my thinking and research for this thesis I have read across a number of different fields, each with their own theoretical and historical origins. In attempting to bring these different fields together one is faced with reconciling their different epistemologies and methodologies. This chapter explains how I go about this endeavour.

Firstly, I will enumerate some of the theories that underpin the different fields. I will then argue that their differences can be reconciled either by finding an overarching theory or, more simply, by accepting their differently conceived ‘facts’ as facts in a simplified model. I will go on to describe this model, list the assumptions it entails and finally define some of the terms I will be using

### ***2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings***

This thesis is based on four different theoretical premises.

1. The first premise is that of systems theory. This is the foundation theory of family therapy with which I worked for 25 years.

A system is a number of components that are connected together to form a whole. The human organism is a living system. The lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, brain, etc. function together to create the living identity that is bounded by the skin. Since the 19th century living organisms have been understood as self-maintaining and self-organizing entities, but Bateson in 1973 brought the cybernetic ideas of self-righting systems to both individual beings and social groups. Bateson’s concepts of adaption used evolution theory and cybernetics which he applied to social systems [p415-421] and have some similarity to Piaget’s [1950] concepts of accommodation and adaption which he developed in relation to child development.

Structurally, systems consist of hierarchically nested subsystems and they must provide for communication, regulation of critical parameters and an ability to change reference points. Functionally, a system must be capable of maintaining homeostasis, changing the reference norms to which the homeostasis occurs and deciding whether to change them or not. [French, 1977, p 21]

As can be seen, organization as well as cybernetic metaphors can be used to illuminate and extend systems theory. Other concepts such as role theory are relevant to this thesis.

Systems theories are essentially objective and positivistic. They rely on empirical observation to provide proof or legitimacy to their claims.

2. A second series of theories are required to make sense of the individual who acts. These theories attempt to answer the question of what are the factors that go towards an individual acting in one way rather than another? Of the many theories that address this question, Habermas's idea of a lifeworld seems most useful to my project [1989]. The lifeworld, as I understand it, includes the whole "taken-for-granted" features of the world (both social and physical, internal and external) that form the context within which the person (or group) acts. This context includes the inner world of the individual such as their values, worldviews, needs and desires. Individuals can behave in a habitual, reactive manner as determined by this lifeworld or they can reflect on some of the factors that influence them by objectifying them allowing them to act in a more rational, reasoned way. Habermas argued that the lifeworld is constituted, both for the individual and for the community by "communicative action." Thus the theory is inter subjective rather than subjective. It depends on interactions for the internalization of values and worldviews and on these, among other factors, to be guiding influences in each of our lives.

It operates from a constructionist epistemology.

3. Another set of theories is necessary to explain the development of this individual from infancy to adulthood. Clearly biology in the form of genetic inheritance, physical and neurological growth and maturity, and the biological requirements for human survival and reproduction are important. Attachment theory may be mentioned at this point. While attachment theory is based on biological needs, it has interactional and constructional components. Thus it has both a biological and a psychological aspect.

Theories of continuity and discontinuity or change are equally important to development. Dynamic systems theories provide a link between systems theory

and development over time [Thelan & Smith,1996]. Most of these modern theories emphasize the following:

- Change and relative plasticity;
- Relationism and integration of levels of organization;
- Historical embeddedness and temporality; and
- The limits of generalizability, diversity and individual difference. [Lerner, 1996, p2]

According to Lerner these theories assume that “Neither continuity nor discontinuity is absolute” [p6]. Such a developmental systems perspective is at variance with the behavioural genetic theories of Plomin and others [p6] which appear to assert that nature (genes) is the dominant factor that determines behaviour.

But Lerner argued that “..the genetic programme view is not supported by the current literature in molecular genetics” [p6]. Plomin [1986] has also criticized interactionalism, that is, the idea that behaviour is determined by the interaction of a number of different factors including both hereditary and environmental. Magnusson quoted Plomin’s criticism that “..the ‘main effects’ [of interactions] cannot be found “because everything interacts with everything else” but - everything does not react with everything else and operating factors do not react in a random way, they are lawful but not predictable.”[Magnusson & Stattin, 1996, p697] Unpredictability is the result of complexity rather than randomness.

Fischer et al recognize that any analysis of human behaviour involves “..starting in the middle of things,” that is, starting with people as they are, “..with [the] embodied, contextualized, socially situated individual and joint activity..” and that this necessitates “..a dynamic multicomponent approach” [1996, p468].

Many models include the concept of self-organization, that is, “..pattern and order [that] emerge from the interaction of the components of a complex system without explicit instructions.”[Thelan & Smith, 1996, p564] Development is considered “..as ontogenetic selection from a pool of more or less constrained potentialities and the subsequent selective optimization of the entered pathways.” [Baltes et al, 1996, p1045] It involves increasing differentiation and organizational hierarchies (orthogenic) [Wapner & Demick, 1996, p775].

A dynamic-maturational model of the organization of relationships that has two dimensions, namely the sources of information and the degree of integration, has been developed by Crittenden. It has an advantage for this paper because one of its central aspects is the function of protection in which attachment behaviour is featured. However it does not include the cultural influence on the attachment relationship. [Crittenden, 1999]<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this model incorporates most of the presently known understandings in this very complex field.

Child development, looked at through these lenses, is also an empirical science with positivist aspects while remaining grounded in intentionalism and constructionism.

4. Finally, there is a strain of social criticism running through this paper that forms the motivation and provides the reason for the development of attributes of 'good' citizens. This is not so much constitutive of a theory as of an attitude to the social scene as I presently understand it.

This attitude is informed by the work of philosophers and sociologists who have recognized common problems, issues and dilemmas in the functioning of Western, capitalist democracies but who have posited different reasons for their development. The arguments around these differences are of less importance to this thesis which is directed at some ways to ameliorate the problems themselves.

The claim that everything is relative and that there is no way to take a truly objective stance is a prominent feature of current thinking [e.g. Kenny, 1988]. This assumption that it is not possible to find the truth, seems, on the surface, to be contradictory to those made by the theories mentioned up to now which are predicated on discovering an objective reality or truth. There are a number of ontologies and epistemologies that could be used to reconcile these differences. One developed by Maturana and Varela [1988] is a dense, rigorously logical and self-referential system. Maturana's ideas have been widely criticized as being tautological and unscientific. [Von Glasersfeld, 1988] Despite this critique the theory provides a coherent explanation for, and connection between many concepts put forward by other thinkers [Mahoney, 1991, p393]. Two features of Maturana's theory are particularly useful for my purposes. They are firstly, that their theory has a biological basis that joins individual biology, psychology and

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<sup>1</sup> Crittenden has since amended her model to include cultural and other components.

neurology to social systems. Secondly, it assumes that emotions are biological and therefore foundational. In other words the capacity to experience emotion is biologically built into our constitution. Furthermore it conceives of communication as “..that behavioural coordination which we observe as a result of it.” [Maturana & Varela, 1988, p195] In other words, it echoes Habermas. They argued for a biological origin (that is, the biological capacity to experience, construct and desire) of all social, cultural and even ethical phenomena. On the other hand, they note that we cannot “..step out of our cognitive domain” [p241] thus uniting the biological and the constructed worlds. At a fundamental epistemological level this theory answers the question how do we know what we know by replying we know how by knowing how! For Maturana the map and the territory are the same [Keeney, 1988]. Maturana’s ideas are compatible with most of the modern theories of development mentioned above, so except for their value in theorizing the place of the observer, the main features are familiar to other theories.

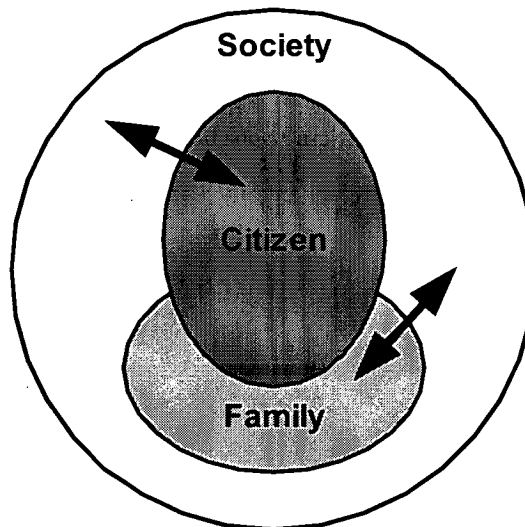
Maturana’s ideas are, perhaps, the theories that bind this thesis together, however, it is unnecessary to accept them in order to accept or reject my arguments. I do not wish to debate the relateness of truth or the difficulties of objectivity, instead I argue that despite their problematic validity we cannot let ourselves become too cynical about the possibility of reaching out toward a better society. It is in this vein that this thesis is presented.

In summary, the bulk of the psychological and sociological literature around which I construct my argument considers reality either to be out there, objective, or else to be socially constructed through our distinctions and classifications. Either way the ‘facts’ as revealed by scientific research are taken to have some validity. Using this argument, this thesis is predicated on the empirical work done by others from which I construct a theoretical linkage that can be further evaluated by empirical research.

### **2.3. Working Model**

In order to structure this work and to clarify its ideas I will utilize a working model that illustrates the relations between various fields. The thesis is essentially reflective and inductive, not empirical or deductive. It strives for a possible synthesis from reviews of different bodies of literature. Out of such a synthesis a hypothesis will be proposed that can be tested in subsequent research. My thesis cannot be encapsulated in a simple, elegant statement. It addresses the relationship between the macro-system of the social

and natural world and the micro-system of individual psychology linked through the medium of the community of citizens as they act in or not in concert. It is also about the special role of parents in influencing the type of citizens their children will grow into. Thus it requires a theoretical base that includes time and change as well as structure. A dynamic systems approach is the most relevant for my purposes. The structure can be conceived as in the following diagram ().



*Figure 2.1. The individual citizen in relation to society*

The figure shows the individual as an egg shape partly enclosed within the family but as the individual grows into adulthood emerging from it to fully and directly interact with the surrounding culture. The arrows indicate that there is a two-way interaction between the individual and the culture/society; the family and the culture; and the family and the individual. This diagram is based on the ecological approach of Bronfenbrenner where he identifies the macrosystem of society, the microsystem of the individual and the mesosystem of the family<sup>2</sup> [1979, p7-8]. This model fails to reflect the many reciprocal interactions or the changes over time.

As noted above, some models have been constructed to take into account time and change. For example, a developmental contextual view of human development as provided by Lerner et al [1995]; the dynamic-maturational model of the organization of relationships developed by Crittenden [1999]; and there is also a dynamic systems theory espoused by Richardson [2000]. Bronfenbrenner has up-dated his own model to

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<sup>2</sup> A mesosystem comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school and neighbourhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work and social life). [Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p7]



incorporate time and change and has qualified and refined his definitions of micro, meso, and exosystems [Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, pp1013-1017]. While all of these models are more comprehensive than mine they have the disadvantage of being very complex. Richardson, whose theory I have referred to earlier, proposes that some factors which he terms “control parameters” [2000, p78] are more important than others in maintaining stability or promoting change. With this in mind, I have elected to use a simpler model in this paper while keeping in mind the dynamic nature of process.

## ***2.4. Working Method***

This argument will be laid out by examining the literature around two knowledge bases. I will use the writing on the theory and research into attachment to provide the framework for my contention that secure attachment is a vital factor in the development of well-functioning adults. I believe I have covered most of the relevant recent publications dealing with attachment theory. Along the way I will indicate the research findings that assist in the understanding of how attachment develops. The extensive literature on child development and parenting has been reviewed less thoroughly. I have concentrated on those areas that are concerned with social, moral and world view development. There is a high probability that I have missed some relevant literature among the vast bulk that is published. I can only hope that the most significant omissions have been recognized by my supervisors and proof readers. The breadth of the investigation has forced me to use review articles where they are available rather than original papers, particularly to provide background information. I have used the original research whenever possible to provide the evidence for my contentions.

The major criticisms of attachment theory include debates as to its importance over genetically derived temperament and personality factors, as to the continuity over time of the outcomes of different attachment relationships and as to the possibility of generalizing from close relationships to more impersonal ones. Each of these arguments will be discussed later in the text.

I will, then, suggest for the purpose of this thesis, criteria for the qualities that are required in a ‘good’ citizen in present day Australia by, as I indicated earlier, exploring what philosophers, social commentators and sociologists suggest on the subject.

By comparing these criteria with the information obtained through the attachment research I will argue that there is a connection between them, that this hypothesized connection can be tested empirically and that if the hypothesis can be sustained that it raises issues for our society.

## **2.5. Assumptions**

As a result of the discussion laid out so far in this chapter, it is now possible to detail the assumptions upon which this thesis is built. They are as follows:

- The results of empirical research carried out by psychologists, sociologists and others in the areas of parenting, child development and citizenship can be used to various levels of probability depending on their scientific validity.
- Such results, if the research was conducted in Western democracies, can be presumed to be valid in the Australian context.
- The nature of what constitutes a ‘good’ citizen in present day Australia can be decided by inductive reasoning from the functions of citizenship, particularly those functions that promote a better society, and from the beneficial activities that have been shown to or are presumed to lead to such a society.
- The Australian society could be improved if it moved towards being more just and equal, towards assisting in resolving world-wide problems such as global warming, poverty and environmental degradation and towards promoting ethics of tolerance, compassion and community.

It only remains for this chapter to define some of the terms I will be using.

## **2.6. Definitions**

Society, community, family and citizen are terms that are frequently used very loosely. I therefore need to define them for the purpose of this paper. The definition of citizen I will leave to the next section. These are ‘working definitions’ that are not meant to imply that they are the only valid ways of understanding these terms.

**Society** can be defined as the collection of people who are members of a particular unity that has a boundary. “Human society is a number of individuals bound together by a normative order or body of rules” [Benn et al, 1959, p235]. Societies, one could say, are people living their culture, while culture is the analysis of what they did. “A state” on the other hand is

described as “..people living in a given territory under one law, with a single governmental system extending to all of them and to no one else.” [Benn, 1959, p252] The nation/state can be a society. It has a boundary and a body of rules. Its membership is made up of citizens, children, aliens and visitors. “The nation is at once assumed to be a rich and inalienable relationship of specifiable compatriots; at the same time it connects anonymous strangers most of whom will never pass each other in the street.” [James, 1996] *A society then is a grouping of people within a boundary and a nation is one such society.*

**Community** can be defined as the social group of a local area that impinges on an individual or family through direct face-to-face interactions and indirectly through its organization, geography and resources. For the purposes of this thesis *communities are local.*

**Culture,** in the sense I am using it, is the set of beliefs, values and habits that are the norm in a particular society or community. Bronfenbemer’s definition of macrosystem is similar. “The macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems [micro-, meso-, exo-] that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideologies underlying such consistencies.” [Bronfenberner, 1979, p7]

A nation can be said to have a unique culture. In *United We Stand Divided We Fall* Samways explains that “A country’s culture incorporates its accumulated body of knowledge, customs and beliefs. Culture determines and reflects priorities and values which change over time. So the laws of a country are related to its culture.” [1999, p11] Black [1988] explains that

“..the nation or nation/state as a representative of a unit of culture is respected and receives loyal commitment because it does... provide law and social order, concrete expectations about how we may plan our future, about employment, property rights, etc. and also some security as to how unknown persons are going to conduct themselves towards us. But more than that it also bestows a sense of corporate identity and a source of what we call morality.”

Using this argument I can locate citizens both within a nation and a culture. For my purposes then *a culture is a set of commonly held beliefs and values* and a nation can be said to have an identifiable culture.

**The family**, for the purposes of this paper, is at least two people living together one of whom is a dependent child and another a responsible, adult caregiver. Since this paper is about child development and child-rearing I am not dealing with families in which there are no dependent children. However, the definition does include single parent, joint custody, adopting and step families.

**Attachment** In the first two volumes of *Attachment and Loss* Bowlby [1969;1973] does not define attachment. Instead he talks about attachment behaviour. Attachment behaviour occurs when “Proximity to the mother becomes a set-goal” [1969, p180]. No doubt Bowlby was constructing an objective scientific theory which relied on observable facts to validate it. Bowlby differentiated attachment from dependence in saying that

“..dependence refers to the extent to which one individual relies on another for his existence, and so has a functional reference; whereas attachment as used here refers to a form of behaviour and is purely descriptive. As a consequence of these different meanings, we find that whereas dependence is maximum at birth and diminishes more or less steadily until maturity is reached, attachment is altogether absent at birth and is not strongly in evidence until after an infant is past six months.”  
[p228]

Despite this attachment appears to be *a form of relating which deals with a powerful need for a sense of safety and security on the part of one or other party to a relationship when the need arises in the course of daily living*. It is a subjective experience as well as a set of objective behaviours. There is a ‘secure base’ to which one is ‘attached’. Perhaps it can be likened to a telephone line linking two people to be used when either of them feels the need to call the other. Most of the time the line is not in use but it remains in place. This analogy can be extended by noting that a mobile phone has done away with the need for a line altogether so that there is even greater freedom for each party yet they can still contact each

other. This could be analogous to a mature adult relationship where each party is autonomous yet able to call on the other when necessary. “A truly self-reliant person ... [has] a capacity to rely trustingly on others when the occasion demands and to know on whom it is appropriate to rely... [and] capable of exchanging roles when the situation changes..”. [p359]

By the time Bowlby wrote his third volume *Loss* in 1980 in which he extended his theory to include mourning and grief he is recognizing an “attachment bond.” “Whereas an attachment bond endures, the various forms of attachment behaviour that contribute to it are active only when required.” [p40] The observable behaviours that accompany mourning and loss show, retrospectively, that a deep bond has been present prior to the loss. Bowlby notes that “Many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption and the renewal of attachment relationships. The formation of a bond is described as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone.” [p40]

Bowlby acknowledges that the attachment relationship is only one aspect of a total relationship. “Attachment behaviour is regarded as a class of social behaviour of an importance equivalent to that of mating behaviour and parental behaviour. It is held to have a biological function specific to itself.” [p179,Vol.1] In *A Secure Base* [1988] Bowlby notes that attachment is a separate biological programme from feeding, sexuality and curiosity.

Holmes distinguishes between attachment, attachment behaviour, and the attachment behavioural system:

- attachment is an overall term which refers to the state and quality of an individual's attachments;
- attachment behaviour is defined simply as being “any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual; triggered by separation or

threatened separation; assuaged by proximity- from sight to cuddling”;  
and

- attachment behavioural system is a model of self, other and their relationship which encodes the particular pattern of attachment. [1993, p67-68]

Further according to Holmes the attachment relationship can be defined by the presence of the following:

- Proximity seeking to a preferred figure;
- The secure base effect- a springboard for curiosity and exploration; and
- Separation protest. [p67-70]

Kagan is a trenchant critic of attachment theory yet he acknowledges that there is something- “ From the thousands of tiny interactions that define the caregiver-child relation, a special state evolves. Modern commentators have chosen to call that state attachment.” [Kagan, 1984, p71] Instead of attachment he writes of a “state of ‘being attached’” [p51].

What is evident from this discussion is that attachment is a form of relating that provides a subjective sense of confidence, that has continuity over time and that can be inferred from various behaviours.

There is a more general meaning to attachment. People become attached to their pet, home, to objects that seem precious. They mourn when these are lost. People also become attached to their native and adopted countries. I will return to this point later to argue that there is a strong connection between this general meaning and the more specific meaning used in psychology.

The definition of **citizenship** I leave to the next chapter.

## **2.7. Summary**

I have outlined the basis on which I am able to argue my case. I will use the literature on attachment, on child development and on citizenship to provide the evidence. I have pointed to some of the possible criticisms including the subjective nature of the definition of a ‘good’ citizen, the difficulties in unravelling the complexities of child

development and the priority I give to attachment. Finally I define society, culture, community, attachment and family.

## CHAPTER 3. THE DEFINITION OF CITIZENSHIP

### 3.1. *Citizenship: Its Nature and Definition*

This chapter will consider the nature of citizenship. It will detail some of the power citizens can wield and begin the development of a picture of an ideal citizen. Citizens and their peculiar influence will be described under four headings:

1. As a legal entity defining rights, privileges and duties.
2. As a relationship with a nation and its governing body.
3. As a role, either active or passive.
4. As an attitude holding certain beliefs and values.

These headings will then be used to identify ethical standards from which an ideal citizen will emerge.

A citizen can be defined in various ways. It can have a specific legal meaning. In Australia this is defined in the Australian Citizenship Act 1948. This legal status confers the right to vote and to apply for an Australian passport [Australian Citizenship Council, 2000]. The report by the Australian Citizenship Council *Australian Citizenship for the New Century*, Feb. 2000, goes on to point out that:

“...while the legal status of Australian Citizenship has its place as an important national symbol, a wider, more inclusive concept of citizenship is needed to embrace these permanent residents who are not Citizens... Citizenship, in this broader meaning encompasses ideals of civic life.” [p6]

The report summarizes the history of the concept of citizenship and notes that the “idea of citizens being part of a political community... came back into use in the 18th century.”[p7] This political community or ‘polity’ “..is or can be, or should be, the concern of us all.”[p8] Thus the council move beyond the legal rights of citizens to recognize the relationship of citizens to the community and to their participatory role.

Citizenship; according to Marshall [1964] is not a universal principle “..but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal of citizenship.” He considers citizenship as an entitlement to civic, political and social rights:

- Civic rights include the necessity for individual freedom; the liberty of person; freedom of speech, thought and faith; and the right to own property. It includes the



right for citizens to be part of a political community. It is, Marshall claims, the concept of 'citizen' that partly validate contracts and the right to justice.

- Political rights are the rights to participate and exercise political power.
- Social rights range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share fully in the social heritage and to live a life as a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in that society.

He seems to be saying that it is only in a democracy under the rule of law that citizenship can flourish. It is in the relationship with the democratic government that entitlements are maintained. More than that, Marshall recognizes the need for an ideal of citizenship for which to strive.

“Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed. The urge forward along the path thus plotted is an urge towards a fuller measure of equality, an enrichment of the stuff of which the status is made and an increase in the number of those on whom the status is bestowed.” [Marshall, 1964, p84]. (Note that Marshall uses community in a broader sense than I defined it in Chapter 2).

Thus, despite Marshall's insistence on entitlement as the essential element in citizenship, he acknowledges that there are differing views and that social and civic participation are considered important by other authors. Furthermore he is stating that we should and can strive towards an ideal.

Thompson [1970] is another author who believes civic participation is an important ingredient in citizenship. He argued that citizenship is “..the present and future capacity for influencing politics.” It is the “..active involvement in political life”. Further, Moira Raynor in *Rooting Democracy* [1997] explains that democracy is about debate, consultation and difference of opinion. It is also about commitment. She quoted William Fulbright, an American Senator who stated that “In a democracy dissent is an act of faith. Like medicine, the test of its value is not in its taste, but in its effects.” She suggests participation “..is a requirement of citizenship, not an optional extra.”

These two authors point out that a citizen's relationships are activated in roles and that the attitude they bring to their roles is important. It is clear that the idea of citizenship

can be conceptualized by considering it not only as a legal entity and entitlement but also as a relationship, an attitude towards society and the role one seeks to play. In each aspect an ideal to achieve can be imagined.

### **3.2. *Citizenship as Relationship***

We all “inhabit the world.” [Miszta, 1996, p105; Dewey, 1958, p104]. A part of this world becomes our home. Home is a complex, diverse image that we construct out of our experiences, memories and desires. Much of this imagined conception is shared with others who inhabit the same culture. Habitus, a term coined by Bourdieu, “..is a system of strategies and practices making social order meaningful” [Miszta, 1996, p97]. The citizen dwells within this habitus, relates to it and within it; relating within it in the sense that a group, community or society is grounded in a habitus. Habitus has strong similarities to my definition of culture. It is culture internalized so deeply that it has become the “practical sense” or “ feeling for the game” of living in that culture. [Bourdieu, 1990, p63] The homeland, the country, its land, its people, its institutions and ideals form a composite image that as citizens we relate to. It is a composite image that is as much out of awareness as a tangible image. Out of this composite image I shall identify three facets as most significant relationships.

1. Citizens cannot be defined except as they relate to a country, state or town of which they hold citizenship. “To be a citizen, one not only has to formally belong somewhere; one has also to feel that this belonging is real.” [Frosh, 2001, p62] This is the most obvious relationship.
2. Citizens are also in relationship to a political entity. Thus the body of citizens are one side of the structure of the state where the other side is the state governing apparatus. Individual citizens may oppose the state, they may be prosecuted by the state or they may peaceably abide by its laws; each time they are in a relationship to the state.
3. Recently the environmental movement has expanded the idea of citizenship to include a relationship to the land [for example citizens may be involved in organizations such as Citizens for Land Stewardship; Citizens for a Better Environment; Citizens’ Environment Watch]. Australian Aboriginal and other native peoples maintain a unique relationship to the land which they say, is basic to their identity [Tamisari, 1998]. While the rest of us may not hold such strong

attachments we often do have attachments to special places, our 'sacred sites' so to say [Nsamenang, 1992].

I suggest therefore, that as citizens we relate to:

1. our country of birth or naturalization;
2. to the institutions within the country that govern us; and
3. to the land [and water] that forms our country.

There are some features of relationships that are important to my argument. These are that:

- Each party in a relationship can influence the other. In fact unless there can be some effect it can hardly be called a relationship. Citizens can affect each other and they can influence the institutions of the country while the institutions have an effect on each citizen. We live in social systems.
- Relationships have an enduring quality. They continue over time.
- Relationships have an affective quality. Individuals have feelings, emotions about their relationships. The quality of the relationship affects their feelings about it and about the other party to the relationship. Relationships are marked by their intensity, weak or strong, close or distant and by the level of confidence the parties ascribe to it. In fact, the trustworthiness of the relation is a major determinant of the relationship's intensity, affect and in some cases its endurance.

The enduring quality of a citizen's relationship is often lifelong. It is an ever-present background to our lives, similar to other long-term relationships such as parenthood or that between siblings. At times the relationship is consciously perceived as a sense of belonging, of connection, a feeling of being part of something greater than oneself. We can be swollen with pride and triumph in our country's successes, shrunk in shame, guilt and humiliation at its failures. Some of us can be stirred into a passion of patriotism and loyalty that may be irrational and unwise. [Misztal, 1996, p99; Little, 1999, 215-233] The intensity of our relationship can vary from this overvalued passion to a distant cynicism or indifference as we negotiate the path described by the interaction between our individual psychology and the context through which we pass.

Through reviewing the relationship features as they pertain to citizenship we have discovered that the strength of our relationship and our feelings about it are bound up in the interactions we have as citizens. Since interactions are reciprocal, we citizens can

engage in behaviours that will influence our state institutions, our fellow countrymen and our land. How we decide to act and how we actually behave is determined by the roles we play and the attitude by which we approach them.

There is a new aspect to citizenship with the globalization of the capitalist, market economy. Waters, an Australian sociologist, argued that the democratic principles underlining the state are antithetical to global capitalism.

“The state carried a set of commitments to democracy, citizenship, patriotism and welfare while capitalism carried commitments to instrumental rationality, acquisitiveness, individualism and the privacy of person and property.” [1995, p125]

Turner asserts that there are “..global concerns about the relationship between environment, community and body such that the quest for social security has been replaced by concerns for ontological security.” [2001, p189-209]. Whether or not this is a valid critique, the facts of the internationalization of institutions and the international effects of government policies means that citizens need to be cognisant of their relation to the whole of humanity besides the citizens of the particular country in which they reside. “This problem..” of citizenship as a national identity or citizenship as human identity, “..is central to the whole modern problem of global identities.” [Turner, 1993, p4] Since “Globalization as a concept refers to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole...” citizens have to “...become conscious of the world as a whole.” [Robertson, 1992, p41] The Australian Citizenship Council addressed this point in their report stating that “...while the concepts of citizenship continue to evolve and some people can have a civic feeling for certain international organizations, the state remains the principal form of political organization.” [p13]

### **3.3. *Citizenship as a Role***

Roles are played when one decides and acts consciously or unconsciously in ways that have an effect on the other party to the relationship. Bronfenbener defines a role as “..a set of activities and relations expected of a person occupying a particular position in society, and of others in relation to that person.” [1979] People live out many different roles: parent, friend, student, teacher, customer, client, patient, worker, employer, tourist, to name a few. In performing these and other roles and relating to each other

accordingly we participate in the functioning of society. We are part of the fabric and fluidity of our socio-cultural milieu. Citizenship is one of the many parts we play. Roles are not mutually exclusive. We can be both father and citizen, for example, at the same time. Many of our habits such as putting out the garbage, tidying the nature strip or driving on the correct side of the road qualify as citizenly behaviour in that they affect the community in which we live. Equally our thoughtful decisions about watering or not watering the garden, boycotting genetically modified food or our less responsible participation in unsafe sex become part of the sum total of the community of citizens' response to current issues.

We can be active or passive in our role as citizens. We can be creative or destructive, critical or compliant, rebellious or cooperative. We will determine how we play our role from moment to moment, from situation to situation; at times we will act after conscious thought and at other times we will act out of habit or passion. However we behave, we can rarely avoid participating. Even a non-action contributes to the overall effect. Whatever ways we play our part we contribute to social change whether for the better or for the worse. Our role as a citizen embraces most, if not all, of our social being.

Thompson [1970] also deals with citizenship mainly as a role. The standards he uses to judge the level of citizenship activity within a nation include: participation, discussion, and rational voting. Participation either as a passive audience, for example, to a TV news report, becomes active if the person watching also discusses the contents with someone else. These activities increase the participants' political knowledge and their awareness of their own interests. They also allow the development of cooperation and a sense of community. Both improve the possibility of rational voting. In Thompson's view, citizens are citizens when they are participating and discussing in that role. In this sense then, citizenship has unique features that are not shared with the other roles we take on. His other standard is equality, a value that leads me into the next layer of citizenship, that of attitude.

### **3.4. *Citizenship as an Attitude***

Attitude "...is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour...evaluating refers to all classes of evaluative responding, whether overt or covert, cognitive, affective or behavioural." [Eagly &

Chaiken, 1993, p207]. Another, rather easier to understand definition is given by Petty and Cacioppe who note that “Attitude should refer to a general, enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object or issue” [1991, p208].

Our beliefs about the nature of the world, our place in it and how we should relate to other people are the basis of our attitude as citizens. The prevailing dominant ideology that colours our interpretation of our world is that of the market economy. The heritage of the Enlightenment and its offspring, modernism, of which the market economy is part, celebrates human progress, human domination over nature, competitiveness, individualism, consumerism and self-interest. [Crotty, 1998, p18; also Lasch, 1991, p520-1; Bellah, 1985, p143] Bringing this attitude to citizenship can lead to the raping of the land, to the loss of social cohesion, to cynical indifference to our governing institutions and to a weakening of interest in community and country [Handy, 1994, pp7-11; Hobsbawm, 1993, p583]. On the other hand a general sense of uncertainty in the public domain precipitates a hardening of attitude toward outsiders; a turning in towards one’s own social group, class, race, religion or nation [Little, 1999, pp66, 181-182]. Citizens who are fearful can play destructive, intolerant roles using their undoubted patriotism for divisive ends.

We may adopt a hopeful or despairing attitude; a prosocial or antisocial one, an attitude of helplessness or one born from a feeling that each of us can have some effect.

Thompson’s [1970] ideas of citizenship are underpinned by these following “presuppositions”:

- Autonomy, that is, I am the best judge of my own interests and improvability (and that I can become a better judge of politics and society). These are the presuppositions of a liberal democracy. An elitist democracy, as Thompson said, does not require citizens to either be autonomous or able to improve, in fact their unimprovability is the reason to favour an elite governing body.
- Equality, that is, “..treating all persons equally [in whatever respect under consideration] unless relevant reasons can be given” [p150] is derived from presuppositions. Most citizenship theorists, said Thompson, agree that “..democracy without some significant form of equality is unacceptable.” [p149] A

belief in equality then, seems important in the attitude a citizen takes toward others as is the urge to improve one's political judgement.

### **3.5. Summary**

I can now draw together the definition of a citizen I am using in this thesis.

- A citizen is a member of a democratic state. A state where there is some degree of equality between its members.
- A citizen is legally entitled to vote.
- A citizen is in a continuing relationship with the nation, its land and its institutions.
- A citizen acts out his/her citizenship through a variety of roles. Participation is obligatory.
- Citizens bring to their relationships and roles attitudes that frequently determine how they will contribute to society. They may act responsibly or irresponsibly, pro- or anti socially. This thesis is interested in nurturing responsible citizens.
- The attributes of a 'good' citizen include sense of belonging, a willingness to trust, a readiness to treat everyone with equal respect, a sense of responsibility to one's fellow citizens, to the place in which one lives, to the rest of humanity and to the future, the urge to continually improve one's ability to evaluate one's stance and the motivation to participate in the nation's decisions. Many of these qualities are predicated on an autonomous self.

## CHAPTER 4. THE 'GOOD' CITIZEN

### ***4.1. Introduction***

The purpose of this chapter is to define the qualities a modern citizen requires so that I can go on to ask what type of child rearing might permit the development of such qualities in children.

One way to begin to discover what constitutes a 'good' citizen is to review the functional behaviours such a citizen should display. In order to do this it is necessary to consider the socio-political situation within which that 'good' citizen lives and acts. Among other factors, the type of democracy, the cultural values, the aspirations of the populous and their leaders will affect the way a citizen can carry through his/her role.

I have limited this thesis to the citizens of Australia, thus the question becomes- what are the requirements of a 'good' citizen in Australia in this early part of the twenty-first century? Philosophers, social commentators, sociologists, politicians and many others have put forward their opinions on the issue of the qualities of a 'good' citizen. Most of these authorities have discussed citizenly qualities as they pertain to western democracies of which Australia is one. I will review some of these opinions in the course of this chapter. I have already noted that many authorities differ, both when they consider the goals of social progress and, even if they agree on that score, when they identify the means to get to that goal. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, it may be that some common features of a 'good' citizen can be discovered. I will proceed by firstly, examining the duties and obligation of citizenship to identify the attributes needed to perform these duties. I will then argue for the requirement that citizens live under the constraints of moral values. The qualities of 'good' citizenship will be drawn out from these discussions.

### ***4.2. Citizen's Obligations***

In Chapter 3 I defined the meaning of citizenship in the context of this thesis. I argued that citizens are in continuing relationship with the nation, its land and its institutions; that they act through a variety of roles and that they adopt specific attitudes which determine how these roles and relationships are acted out. I added that citizens could act responsibly or irresponsibly, for the good of society as a whole or not. I argued that participation, responsible action and concern for common good are duties for citizens. In



this section I will enlarge on the ideas of responsibility and participation discussed earlier. I will suggest additions to that list namely a sense of belonging, a willingness to trust and a standard of ethical behaviour.

#### ***4.2.1. A Sense of Belonging***

A sense of belonging would appear to be important for most people as a grounding for their lives [Maslow, 1968]. An Australian national survey [Australian Election Study, 1996] noted that 66% of the participants the people surveyed thought that a sense of belonging was the most common criterion entitled one to citizenship. This subjective criterion, where one entitles oneself by an emotional tie, rated higher than more objective criteria such as being born in Australia (23%) or speaking English (60%). Belonging is a factor in citizenship. It is also an emotion that provides a motivation for citizens when they feel an obligation to be involved with the community to which they feel they belong. [Australian Citizenship for the New Century, 2000, p14; Holton, 1998, p221].

Some definitions are required in order to develop this argument. According to *The MacQuarie Dictionary* [1997]

**To belong** means to be connected; to have a duty towards; to have a rightful place; to be part of; to be an attribute of; to be the property of; and

**Belonging** is to have a relationship with; an affinity with; a sense.

Belonging seems, from these definitions, to be connected with groups rather than individuals. Humans don't usually use belonging in the sense of being the property of or owned by someone when talking about their relationship with other human beings. If proprietary relationships are excluded we usually seem to be talking about a relationship with a group, for example a family, clan, organization, gang, city or country that is, a bounded community or society.

The common theme within these otherwise diverse groups is that:

- a person has a place and a role, duty or responsibility; and that
- the group or rather the members of the group, have a duty or responsibility towards the individual member. It would also seem that for belonging to develop the group membership has to have a level of care in their relationship with their members or

a sense of joint endeavour and of dependence on each other or a sense that the stronger will protect the weaker and the weaker will care about the well-being of the stronger. [Osterman, 2000]

Citizenship is about belonging in this sense. Belonging to a democratic nation requires then, that one has duties and that one's fellow citizens have responsibilities towards the individual. It is this sense of belonging somewhere, of being part of, a member of a particular group or community that provides citizenship with its emotional appeal. To be an exile, an alien, a person without citizenship somewhere is like being a non-person. Belonging provides a sense of security, no doubt unrealistically at times. Security and belonging are fundamental human desires [Maslow, 1982; Kunc, 1992, pp28-29]. Modicums of both are basic. As quoted earlier "To be a citizen, one not only has to formally belong somewhere; one has to also feel that this belonging is real." [Frosh, 2001] Frosh, here, is emphasizing the importance of felt experience, of the emotional substrate of citizenship that contributes to its vividness and vitality.

Modern Western values highlight individuality and personal independence [e.g. Lasch, 1977; Bellah, 1985, pp143-150; Touraine, 1995, p268]. A boundary that restricts choice is created around the individual by the power of societal and cultural norms. An autonomous individual wants to be free to choose whether to obey these norms or to argue rationally for them to be altered. There is a place, then, in the culture of individuality not only for the critic but also for the rebel and revolutionary. Autonomy appears at first sight, to be at odds with the sense of belonging and the joint project of society to live together in some harmony, however autonomy and belonging develop in parallel as I will show later in the thesis. A sense of belonging, then, is a valuable feature in any citizen.

#### ***4.2.2. Responsibility***

A responsible citizen is clearly 'better' than an irresponsible one. Responsibility however, begs the question to whom is one responsible? What are we responsible for? How is this responsibility carried through? I suggest that citizens are responsible for their side of the citizen/state and citizen/citizen relationships, for their roles within these relationships and for the attitude they bring to them.

My argument partially set out in the previous chapter, is that a citizen is responsible to his/her fellow countrymen, to the land he/she inhabits, to the future generations that will

inhabit that same land and, through the international policies adopted by the nation and its members to all the peoples of the world.

As part of the social community that makes up the nation we participate in its functioning. Our actions make a difference however small they might be. They are not insignificant. We can and should be held accountable by the community for our actions and lack of action. *The MacQuarie Dictionary* definition of responsibility is “..to be accountable or answerable”. It is, perhaps, difficult to accept that we might be accountable to the land, to nature. We might say the land cannot pass judgement. When the land complains though, it does so by becoming eroded, salt laden, reduced in fertility. Desertification is one of the ways the land speaks to us. Species are becoming extinct at an alarming rate. According to some estimates this is occurring at 100-1000 time the normal [David Attenborough, “The State of the Planet” ABC TV 10/1/01]. Is this how nature passes judgement on us?, “asks” us to be accountable for years of destructive domination? Perhaps we can be said to be answerable to Nature itself.

We hold past generations responsible for the deeds done in their time although we might excuse them for their lack of foresight if we believe they were genuinely unaware of the impact they would cause in the future. Who, now, does not curse the day rabbits or cane toads were released in Australia? Yet at the time there was no intention of causing harm. Perhaps there is no excuse if we are aware of the hazards of a particular course of action. Future generations might be right to condemn us if we fail them by continuing a deliberate policy of, for example, pillaging the sea whilst being aware that fish stocks are falling to dangerous levels.

This argument puts forward the suggestion that a responsible attitude to our fellow citizens and people, to the future and to nature is a necessary quality of the ‘good’ citizen. It is an attitude the ‘good’ citizen brings to his/her role. What this responsible attitude might be is beginning to emerge from the above discussion. It involves respect, it involves concern and it involves foresight or wisdom. It follows that these qualities are necessary features of a ‘good’ citizen.

### **4.2.3. Participation**

While participation is a duty of a ‘good’ citizen, many people feel powerless even in a democracy [Dalton, 1996, p196; Agger, 1991, p195]. I have already stated that citizens

by virtue of their being involved in relationships have a degree of power and influence. In each individual case this may appear to be insignificant, however, in aggregate over the whole population it can and does create change. One only need look at the most recent American election in 2000 for presidency to realise how just a few votes changes the course of history.

“We the Australian people..” begins the preamble to the Australian constitution that was put to referendum in 1998. The USA and Eire are among countries with similar beginnings to their constitutions [Australian Electoral Commission official referendum pamphlet, 1999]. These words recognize the authority of the citizens, the priority given to the people over the institutions and structures that govern them. It is in the relationship between citizens as people, as individuals, or as interest groups and the institutions of state control and power that citizens can be seen to have an effect. Citizens act as they take on the roles of voter, consumer, lobbyist, and as creators, conveyors and persuaders of social, political and moral opinions. Some of these means of participation are detailed as follows:

- Participation as a voter.

In Australia, where voting is compulsory all citizens are voters in federal and state elections. The various states and the federal Senate and House of Representatives have different proportional representative systems so that voters not only have to consider the policies and personalities of the various parties and individuals standing for election they have to understand the voting system enough to cast their votes most effectively. Both require the seeking out of information and some degree of deliberation. With that proviso voters exercise citizenly power. Citizens are more than voters important as is that triennial or quadrennial task.

- Participation as a consumer.

Citizens are more than consumers too, but equally as consumers citizens have a lot of economic power particularly when it is coordinated effectively over the population. Alistair Graham declared “..citizens are finding it much more effective to get what they want by dealing with retailers as consumers than by dealing with governments as electors.” [1999, p268]

There are many examples of consumer power. Perhaps the most recent and alarming is the mad cow disease scare in Germany where two Ministers have had to resign and

one, the Minister of Health, explained that the reason there had been a delay in informing the public about the dangers occurred as a result of the strength of the agricultural industry lobby [SBS TV news report, 10/1/01]. Consumer boycotts often start in response to an already risen alarm. They are frequently informed by fear rather than rational thought nevertheless they show the power of the consumer.

Some British supermarkets banned the sale of genetically modified food in their stores; some have promoted organically grown produce in response to perceived public opinion [BBC News Report, 18/3/98]. The Body Shop has traded on the goodwill it created by selling only products not tested on animals and ploughing back some of its profits into community projects [Roddick, 2001]. In these and other ways consumers can not only make their voices heard in the boardrooms of power but can also frequently precipitate changes.

- Participation as a member of an organization.

People can join organizations, interest groups, charities and lobby groups. They may do so for personal, self-centred reasons or they may feel it necessary to further some cause out of altruistic concerns. For instance, conservation groups have been instrumental in altering Federal and State government policies, Labour trade unions have helped to improve working conditions and women's lobby groups have worked toward changing government's and societies attitudes towards women.

- Participation in daily life.

Stone [1977] describes political behaviour as including all of a person's activity that is directed toward the cooperative solution of the problems of daily living. "The personal is political" is a similar popular slogan. These statements seem to suggest that many acts of daily living are political acts. They are acts by citizens. From simple tasks such as driving on the correct or wrong side of the road, behaving courteously or not toward strangers, obeying or not obeying water restrictions to more complex activities such as running a youth group or airbrushing graffiti on a building we all act out our role as citizens each day.

Our attitudes and behaviour towards other people and our environment are equally important. Civic mindedness and voluntary engagement in social service, e.g. youth leader, civil defense, meals-on-wheels, Rotary and other service clubs help to oil the wheels of society. Politeness, helpfulness, tolerance and neighbourliness are social

attitudes that smooth relationships between people. Putnam [1993, p88] discusses the “virtuous citizen” as one who has a “..steady recognition and pursuit of the public good at the expense of all purely individual and private ends”. They exhibit the qualities of helpfulness, respectfulness, trust, tolerance and belief in equality. Similarly, Zohar and Marshall mention the “citizen pilgrim” calling it a sacred mission [1993].

- Participation by making our opinions known.

As citizens we can voice our opinions by writing to the newspapers, signing petitions, talking on talk back radio, sending letters or E-mail to politicians, making our opinions heard at our local club or hotel bar. Change in society occurs when enough people enter the debate and consensus begins to develop that spreads throughout the social group. Habits maintain predictability. Voicing opinions may initiate change.

The ‘good’ society “..will be a discursive community capable of thinking about the common good..” [Bellah, 1991, p285]. ‘Good’ citizens, therefore, are those who participate in discussion. The well-being of democracy and the civil society that goes with it depends on the strength of our faith in it and the willingness of citizens and their elected representatives to work to defend it. Putnam, in 1993, as a consequence of his research into democracy in Italy, states that good decision making depends on a constant dialogue between citizens and government. A democracy needs to have communicating, engaged citizens, including people outrageous enough to form opinions about social problems and to engage in public discussion. “Democracy is not about voting..” said Goenawan Mohamed, an Indonesian writer quoted by Naipaul [1998] “..it is about debate, the quality of intellectual life.”

These examples imply that a citizen’s participation is not only a duty, it can be an effective way to maintain the status quo or assist in the processes of change. They also illustrate that for participation to be fruitful the individual citizen needs to be respectful, tolerant and concerned for the public good. Poggi suggests participation requires an articulateness and an awareness of the issues [1990, p194]. Thompson, in his book *The Democratic Citizen* [1970], as I indicated earlier, suggested that a readiness to treat everyone with equal respect and the urge to continually seek to improve one’s awareness and understanding of political issues are two important

attributes he considered that enables participation to be valuable to social progress.  
[pp42 & 61]

#### 4.2.4. *Trust*

Trust may be another ingredient in the qualities that make up a 'good' citizen. Trust is the sense of being able to rely on someone to provide something that is important to your well-being, for example, the space to do your own thing, the willingness to cooperate on a task like keeping to the rules of the road. Defined in this way, trust is a feeling about a relationship which may or may not be accompanied by rationally considered evidence. Confidence can be defined as having to do with an object rather than a person. Of course, people are sometimes used as objects.

Relationships with other people are complex and varied. They continue over time. An individual starts in a relationship with some mental schema that puts an expectation on this new relationship which will be confirmed or not as the relationship proceeds. These notions will be elaborated in later chapters.

Someone with an expectation that people can be trusted is likely to start a relationship in a positive way, that is, they are willing to open themselves to be accepted and to accept the other person. A positive beginning to a relationship frequently results in the trust being reciprocated. [Axelrod, 1984, p99; Hirsh, 1977, p80] The opposite situation occurs when someone starts an interaction with another with the expectation that no one can be trusted. They behave defensively, guardedly and perhaps, aggressively. In such an encounter there is less chance of trust developing thus confirming in the individual that no one can be trusted.

Trust is the basis of the cooperation and coordination of social life. It forms the lubricant that permits social life. Poggi quoted Tocquaville that "...interpersonal trust is probably the moral obligation that most needs to be diffused among people if a republican society is to be maintained." [Poggi, 1972, p59] It is clear that 'good' citizens require an ability to trust strangers when appropriate. However there are many authorities who believe that in our modern society there are forces that inhibit the cultivation of trust. In *Culture of Fear* Furedi states that:

"There is no doubt that the 1980s saw an acceleration in the disintegration of social solidarity and of communities.... The sentiment of trust suffered...the process of individuation has contributed to the consolidation of the

consequences of risk". He continues "...individuation without a parallel process of reintegration into some new social network can contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of distrust." [Furedi, 1997, p140-141].

Mistrust leads to individual isolation which leads to further mistrust in a cyclical feedback system.

Peter Marris, in his book *The Politics of Uncertainty* [1996], puts forward "...a way of thinking about power which emphasizes mastery of contingencies..". He suggests that "...freedom of action in the face of uncertainty is a privileged freedom," and that "...To be able to secure commitments from others, without having to make reciprocal commitments of your own, is one of the most attractive prerogatives of superior power" [p89] Thus he claims that "...The progressive management of uncertainty, as it thrusts the burdens of insecurity progressively onto the less and less powerful, provokes a profound social alienation." [p104] He goes on to explain how many defenses against uncertainty are self-defeating. Victims learn to blame themselves, they become stoical or deny their own pain, they search for security by isolation and by building strong defenses against attack, that is, a paranoid position, or else they resort to passive ideas like fate or God's will. Marris continues by saying "These inequalities encourage social responses of withdrawal and denial which undermine compassion, understanding and the will to address the hardships they cause or to acknowledge our common responsibility for them." [p116] Marris is arguing that as social trust dissolves and security is lost, the very ingredients of 'good' citizenship that I have already mentioned are in danger. The establishment of a community of citizens who are able to trust, therefore, is considered important for the welfare of democracy [Putnam, 1993, p170-176].

There is a further body of knowledge where trust is emphasized as being vital for the well functioning society. The work on social capital is important in this respect. I do not intend to examine this area except to note its existence and its addition to the importance attached to trust in the make up of a 'good' citizen. [e.g. Krygier, 1997; Paxton, 1999; Putnam, 1993]

#### ***4.2.5. Socially Responsible Ethical Position***

Another feature that seems to be a duty of a 'good' citizen is to hold a socially responsible ethical position. Throughout the literature I have surveyed run the themes



of an overemphasis of individual autonomy, of self-interest and of competitiveness to the detriment of cooperation, compassion, and responsibility for a joint future. There are numerous commentators [e.g. Giddens, 1991; Glyn-Jones, 1996; Gaita, 1999; Castoriadis, 1997; Fukuyama, 1999] who have expressed their concerns at an apparent decline in moral values in today's Western societies. These are moral issues to which we should take heed. The insecurity of our daily lives is echoed in our anxiety about the world's future. Rather than this insecurity urging us to rise to the challenges it more often results in apathy and despair. The citizen would have to find a different balance of qualities if he/she were to assist in addressing these issues.

"Our interests and desires, including our political desires and interests, are in part morally constituted." [Gaita, 1999, p26]. Turning to a prominent psychologist, Mahoney notes that "Unless and until our moral development becomes sufficient to balance our knowledge and power with wisdom and responsibility, all other potential developments will remain jeopardized." [Mahoney, 1991, p4] These and other commentators agree that an ethical standard is important for citizens to engage responsibly with their fellow citizens and to assist society toward a better future for all.

In this section I have proposed and argued that it is obligatory for a 'good' citizen to belong, to take responsibility, to participate, to trust and to hold to ethical standards. In the next section I will consider particular ethical standards a 'good' citizen might hold.

### **4.3. Citizens of Value**

In this section I will argue for the need for a strong moral base to counter the decline in ethical standards that is believed to be occurring. A moral base I suggest, is the foundation on which to build a repertoire of behaviours. I will continue by reviewing the importance of the active, informed participation of citizens in order for democracy to function well.

That citizens require a certain moral/ ethical base is not immediately obvious. I will pursue the idea by in the following way:

- Firstly, I will utilize literature that suggests that moral values are fundamental in the formation of the self. I have previously noted that an autonomous self is a quality important in citizenship. I argue, therefore, that a citizen requires a moral

base. The specific moral/ethical standards are not yet specified. This argument is laid out in 4.3.1.

- I continue the argument by starting with the idea that ‘good’ citizens are people who consider the ‘common good’ as a part of their decision-making processes. This idea was canvassed in Chapter 3, 3.4 under ‘Citizenship as an Attitude’. I have argued through the presentation from the evidence of various authors, that there has been a decline in the moral tone of Western societies and that at least, some of the crises affecting the world can be related to that decline. I suggest for this decline to reverse more citizens will need to be imbued with a morality that includes the ‘common good’.
- Citizens’ values can be considered from the position of the requirements necessary for democracy to be maintained and to flourish. A group of authors has dealt with citizenship from this angle. Some of these authors will be used to add to the argument that citizens require a particular moral approach. This and the previous idea are pursued in 4.3.2.
- By approaching the issue of citizens and morality from another direction I describe some research that investigates altruistic behaviour. Such behaviour can be defined as that where the individual acts under threat to him/her self in the cause of a higher good outside of the self.
- Altruism may seem like the province of saints and super-heroes. Yet each day the newspapers, radio and TV record the acts of ordinary people who have given service beyond the call of duty, who have acted with extraordinary generosity and who have sacrificed time, talents and even their lives to aid others. Not all these acts can be termed altruistic but all are prosocial, that is, they are actions that assist the whole community not just the acting individual. These behaviours could be seen as ideals to which the ‘good’ citizen would strive. The moral values of compassion, fairness, equality, brotherhood and the attributes of courage, fortitude, and not counting the cost can be seen as valuable in the ‘good’ citizen. Prosocial behaviour is discussed under 4.3.3.

### *4.3.1. Citizens, the Self and Morality*

The world is grappling with serious challenges and dilemmas [see for e.g.: Von Weizsacken, 1997, p210; Waters, 1995, p104]. The issues hold no easy answers,

whatever decisions that are made there will be winners and losers, compromises and trade offs. The consequences may not all be foreseen, adjustments will be required. The future, long-term as well as short term, will have to be constantly considered. The point is that there are moral decisions to be made, and as citizens we have to make judgments. We base these judgments on a valuation of what we believe to be right and/or good.

Ehrlich also points to ethical issues as being important for society. He claims that:

“As the size of the global human enterprise shoots past the carrying capacity of Earth, the ethical issues of both the inter group and inter generational equity and the intimately connected ethics of the treatment of human life-support systems and their living components are now moving to the forefront. These will almost certainly be among the great ethical issues of the 21st century.” [2000, p321]

If we need to claim a moral component to our lives as citizens we must discover the moral values that are required.

Despite the apparent decline in social morality individual citizens may stand out against the grain with a different set of moral values. While some values appear dominant others may still exist and be available to guide people in particular circumstances. Margolis [1998] postulates that there are several selves that are learnt through primary socialization in the early years of life. These selves are culturally and historically determined. They participate in relationships with their unique ethics and ways of boundary marking. Margolis discusses three “primary” selves:

- the exchanger who relates to strangers with an ethics based on the justice of equality of persons, respecting individuality, rationality, emotional control, self-interest and lack of obligations;
- the obligated self which relates in dyads and whose ethics are justice based on need and responsibility, protection and care, dependency and inequality; and
- a cosmic self that relates to the whole where equality is a universal melding.

She adds three more selves that are combinations of the first three. The civic self, for example, is a combination of the exchanger and cosmic selves. It favours an ethic of contractual fairness, rationality, sharing and the pooling of resources with a yearning for unity. She appears to be suggesting that the different selves pick out particular moral values for use in special situations. Margolis’ classification of selves may be simplistic but it underlines the way we utilize different moral standards when acting in different

social contexts. Multiple selves are, of course, a feature of other psychologies. In fact the fractured self seems to be a feature of the modern world. "A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him", William James is quoted to have said in 1890 [Mahoney, 1991, p216].

Habermas [in McCarthy, 1978, p341] points out that roles as "forms of social integration" and "forms of individual identity" are "intimately connected". I understand him to be saying that role and 'selves' as proposed by Margolis are the two sides of one coin. According to McCarthy, Habermas proposed that there is a subject [an 'I'] behind and beyond the roles the subject acts through. Individuals are "...not merely...the sum of their role attributes but...individuals who, in applying principles, can organize their lives consistently throughout changes and situations and roles." People develop this ability when confronted with conflicts between norms and roles "...as is regularly the case in modern societies." A conflict that "...cannot be mastered within the framework of normal role behaviour." [McCarthy, 1978, p348]. My reason for invoking Margolis and Habermas at this stage is to show the connection between a self and a moral attitude to living. In Habermas' theory the self is integrated under the constraints of a set of moral principles, that is, there is no self without an accompanying morality. This proposition that the self is integrated, even constructed, within a social context and has a moral or ethical character, is one I now turn to.

Griffin said that "...part of what ethics seeks to give expression to may be our self-understanding, our characteristic human sense of what matters." [1996, p6] Smith [1997], also notes that "...what counts as mattering depends on the moral world that is disclosed to them." He continues by stating that "The self and the other co-constitute an 'ethical totality'." [p120] There is reciprocity between what matters to me and what matters to others in my social world. Ethical rules, then, are "shared practices" [Griffin, 1996, p7] which are "...possible only because of the human beliefs, interests, dispositions, sense of importance and so on that go to make up what Wittgenstein calls a 'form of life'." [p7] Further, Griffin said "All value terms are used against a background of certain beliefs about the world." [p34]

What these authors make clear is that ethical rules and values are created and sustained within a particular culture that maintains certain beliefs about the self, the world and their relationship. They are promoting the hypothesis that a sense of self, the moral

beliefs one adopts and the culture of society are intimately connected. Citizens, like all individuals, have a self-identity, a moral/ethical position that judges between good and bad, right and wrong that is constructed within a given cultural milieu. Ethics is about how we ought to live [Singer, 1993, px].

Antony Black [1988] discusses the nation as a unit of culture:

“The nation or nation/state as a representative of a unit of culture is respected and receives loyal commitment [patriotism] because it does... provide law and social order, concrete expectations about how we may plan our future, about employment, property rights, etc. And also some security as to how unknown persons are going to conduct themselves towards us, but more than that, it also bestows a sense of corporate identity and even a source of what we call morality.” [p87]

He is suggesting that moral norms are situated inside the culture of a country or society. Ethical rules and moral values have the peculiar feature of residing in both the private and the public domain. *The relationship between the private and the public morality can be thought of as the private self within a frame of reference generated in the public domain.*

Distinctions have been made between the individual attempts to lead a ‘good’ life (of which the hedonistic ‘good life’ is but one, perhaps debased type) and the concern to live correctly or rightly. There is also a distinction between these more private ways of living and the commonly held, public values and standards which are usually kept and are used to judge each other’s behaviour. For the individual what is right and good frequently coincide but that individual may or may not equate their understanding of right and good with that accepted by the community at large.

A ‘good’ citizen may be defined as one who abides by the norms of society. On the other hand, a ‘good’ citizen may be one who acts on values that are contrary to the accepted values but which he or she believes to be of greater benefit to the community. For instance, acting to promote cooperation in a society that favours the values of competition. It is the latter kind of citizen I wish to claim to be the most useful in the present uncertain world.

Dauenhauer [1998] discusses Ricoeur’s contribution to politics in Western Democracies which he believes to be both “a risk and a promise”. Each citizen ought to recognize that political society, resting as it does on a fiduciary bond, is fragile. Therefore each citizen

ought to “..feel particularly responsible for the horizontal bond that is constitutive of the will to live together.” [p245] It is necessary for a citizen to be an ethical being as “The ethical subject is also a citizen” [p141] while “It is as citizens we become human” [p143]. “The ethical perspective”, according to Ricoeurs, consists in hoping and “..aiming at a ‘good’ life with and for others in ‘just institutions’.” [p143] while “Ethics calls for freedom and equality for and among people. Politics provides the arena in which freedom and equality can find expression.” [p255] “The good citizen’s task,..is to keep a lively tension between these two ethics and what they call for” because the ethics of conviction, by itself, could lead to “..illusions of moralism and clericalism.” However, when it operates indirectly “..by the constant pressure it exerts on the ethics of responsibility and power.” [p257] a balance can be achieved.

A ‘good’ citizen then is the one who, according to Ricoeur, is active and moral. He/she lives a good human life that has an overall aim of a life of action and whose “..morality refers to the articulation of this aim in terms of norms that are treated as obligatory.” [p146]

Crossley agrees saying that citizens “..must know how to engage in citizenship activities.” [1998, p38] It is a “..precarious phenomenon.. Not achieved once and for all, but must be sustained and nurtured within the life world ...duties which involves having a sense of loyalty to one’s community, a loyalty which, Marshall argued, stems from a sense of belonging.” [p39] While citizens must internalize views of the community “..including their culture of citizenship, it is equally important that they are not subordinated to those views.” [p39] That is, citizens need to be involved and yet also be critical.

These researchers and commentators agree that the ethics of cooperation for the common good is a vital ingredient in today’s society but this cooperation does not entail an unwillingness to criticize. The behaviour that makes cooperation possible arises from values of kindness, politeness, concern for others, attempts to understand, even empathize with others. These every day ‘civilized’ values are the outcome not just of the virtue of cooperation but of a higher ‘good’ above and beyond cooperation. This ‘good’ makes the claim that every human being is worthy of respect and so is worthy of our concern. It should be noted here that these values involve more than having interpersonal skills important as they might also be.

The 'good' citizen then, requires an ethical/ moral base that includes cooperativeness and a concern for the common good.

#### *4.3.2. Maturity and Citizenship*

Some writers describe the 'mature' person who brings to society useful qualities. For example, Craib [1998] is interested in defining the mature individual who can survive in a 'globalized' world where "On the one hand the process of 'globalization' seems to produce a distant, powerful system which cannot be controlled; on the other the individual seems increasingly isolated and experiences his or her social world as fragmenting." [p107] He describes Dilman's definition of a mature person where "..infantile conflicts.. [are].. resolved, ..[there is a].. preponderance of good feelings, freedom from destructive and self-centred emotions, lack of concern with defences, no fear of feelings, inner security, deep convictions, genuine interests, self-discipline." He adds that "Our emotions arise in the interplay between our experience of the outside world, and the unconscious fantasies we construct out of our internal world, and our conscious, more rational attempts to make sense of what we do and how we are in the world." [p169] Craib is concentrating on the work done by a mature person to overcome his/her own inner conflicts leaving the individual free to think and act passionately and yet rationally. Self-examination could be considered as an important ingredient in a 'good' citizen.

An Australian perspective is given by Samways [1999] whose book is concerned about the difficulties in maintaining social cohesion. He considers how Australian themes might contribute to this cohesion. The themes he recognizes are:

- Respect for the environment and its sustainability;
- A fair go for all;
- Encouraging independence but helping your mates when they need it;
- Encouraging a relaxed openness, adaptability and creativity;
- Encouraging a balance in family, work and community commitments;
- Respect and acceptance of people regardless of racial or cultural background; and
- Healthy skepticism of too much authority or power. [p126]

He goes on to point out that "We won't stick together if we don't feel responsible for each other." [p131] If social cohesion is important, as many authorities believe, then

these attributes are valuable in a citizen. They match well with the attributes already discussed.

So far, in this chapter 'good' citizens can be described as mature, well-balanced individuals with a moral perspective to their lives.

#### ***4.3.3. Altruism, Prosocial Behaviour and Citizens***

In a study conducted by Oliner and Oliner [1988], 406 German rescuers of Jews during WWII was matched with a sample of non rescuers. The results show that the altruism these citizens displayed was motivated by a strong sense of obligation “..to help others in a spirit of generosity without concern for external rewards or reciprocity”. [Oliner & Oliner, 1988] The study also noted that the parents of these altruistic people modeled such behaviour and valued, in themselves and their children: “..dependability, responsibility and self-reliance because they facilitate taking care of oneself as well as others.” S. Oliner and the Altruism Personality Research Institute completed over 1500 interviews with individuals who have acted altruistically. They conclude that empathy, an internalized sense of care and social responsibility which is felt as love and compassion along with a positive self-esteem and self- efficacy are the common factors in an altruistic personality. [Oliner, 2002]

Another study of “fully committed freedom riders” in the Black American civil rights campaign reported that their parents modeled respectfulness for others, kindness, consideration generosity and helpfulness. [Oliner, 2002]

Prosocial behaviour is the key to the improvement in social life according to Eisenberg [1989]:

“Many agree that the present state of humankind’s interrelationships is deplorable and that it is likely to deteriorate further. The world seems a never-ending arena for violence, injustice, inequality and inhumanity. Improvement in the quality of life must begin with changes in the motivations and behaviours of individuals, in greater concern for others, coupled with a willingness to devote considerable effort and energy to promoting the well being of others.” [p158]

Here again the 'good' citizen is one with a particular moral attitude to the world and society.



Ralston Saul [1997] has written in depth on the various qualities important in citizens of our modern world. He recognizes many of the same qualities that I have already mentioned but finds such lists rather useless in themselves. His view is that each quality holds some virtue but only in relationship with others. It is the balancing of these qualities with each other that is important in order to achieve a vibrant democracy. The human qualities he writes about and which he thinks need to be brought into equilibrium are: (in alphabetical order as he does not prioritize) common sense, ethics, imagination, intuition, memory, and reason. Perhaps his use of 'common sense' is the least easy to understand. Common sense appears to mean a common shared understanding at an unconscious level of what it means to be human. It is a prudence in the face of the uncertainty and complexity that constitute life.

#### ***4.3.4. Conclusions***

From the examples given and from the research done by those studying the qualities required by individuals to maintain a democracy noted above there are clearly common features. These include a strong belief in the values of a democratic society in which everyone is respected and equally valuable, in which fairness and justice prevail and where helpfulness, courtesy and compassion are considered priorities. Yet these beliefs are insufficient in themselves. Individuals need to be capable of acting on them and of critiquing their own and their society's issues. In order to accomplish these duties citizens need the abilities to be self-reflective, to seek wisdom rather than simply knowledge and to have the self assurance to be able to acknowledge that they are fallible.

Looking back over this section I believe that the six qualities in equilibrium described by Ralston Saul in 4.3.3 provide a succinct summary.

#### ***4.4. Comparison with Other Authors***

In the previous sections I have gathered some of the literature on citizenship to argue that certain attributes are required of a 'good' citizen. While I cannot claim that my reading has been exhaustive, Table 4.1 below compares a number of authors who either have not been quoted before or have been mentioned only briefly.

While the quoted authors are mainly modern writers I have added Mills to illustrate that these themes have a long lineage. I could have added a host of others. The common

themes are tolerance, participation, to consider the common good and the concern for the other. Many of the authors add that to live as a 'good' citizen we should prepare ourselves by becoming knowledgeable, skillful, vigilant and critical; we should develop an openness to others and to the new; an ability to forgive and a tolerance of difference; our priority should be the common good attained through debate and negotiation; and we should act with compassion towards others. It is possible to subdivide these qualities into those used when relating with government and bureaucracies, those used when relating to fellow citizens and other people and those required to develop the self so as to lead a right and moral life. This requirement, to be a moral person as a basis for one to relate rightly, is exemplified here by the suggestions made by some of the authors that one should examine oneself, develop a good heart, a social conscience and a commitment that is a powerful motivation to action.

Today we are forced to live with ambiguity, paradox and uncertainty [Giddens, 1991]. To cope with the modern world we seem to require a sense of personal security and worth in order to truthfully recognize this challenge yet find a commitment to a moral position that is strong enough to withstand attack. The virtues that are useful to deal with governmental institutions include: critical and information skills, assertiveness and even courage. Those useful for living in a community include: tolerance, openness, compassion and debate. These, however, are all of value only when they are used. Responsible action needs a sense of purpose, a commitment or a will to act morally, which seems to come from within. In this way self-examination is an integral part of the moral citizen.

	NUSSBAUM Philosophy	BLACK Political Scientist	MILLS Philosophy	SINGER Ethicist	C.E.G. Committee	RAYNOR Sociologist	D.LAMA Religious Leader	ZOHAR Physicist	PUTNAM Social researcher
Commitment to common good		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Compassion	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Participation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Tolerance	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Open, honest	✓	✓		✓			✓		
Vigilant					✓				
Open to new		✓							
Resolve by negotiation					✓			✓	✓

## Nurturing Citizens

	NUSSBAUM Philosophy	BLACK Political Scientist	MILLS Philosophy	SINGER Ethicist	C.E.G. Committee	RAYNOR Sociologist	D.LAMA Religious Leader	ZOHAR Physicist	PUTNAM Social researcher
Knowledge, skillful	✓				✓				
	Nussbaum, 1993	Black, A., 1988	Mills, J.S., 1981	Singer, P., 1993	Canberra, 2000	Raynor, M., 1997	Dalai Lama, 1993	Zohar, D., 1993	Putnam, R.D., 1993

*Table 4.1. The qualities of 'good' citizens as defined by some authors*

### 4.5. Conclusions

In the last two chapters I have defined citizenship and searched the literature to identify criteria that would define a 'good' citizen. A rich harvest of desirable qualities has been uncovered. It is now time to reap the harvest, to winnow it down to essentials. I will attempt to compress the attributes and qualities previously noted into something more manageable.

The foundation of citizenship is the recognition that together citizens in a democracy have the right and ability to help steer the nation towards its destiny. The 'good' citizen considers that this right is also a duty and responsibility. This task can be subdivided into four components as follows:

- The citizen is required to decide what is the best for the nation, that is, what is important for the common good.
- The citizen needs to be motivated to act in the best interests of the nation rather than only out of self-interest.
- The citizen needs to act within the social setting to further what he/she understands as in the common interest.
- The above three components are functional requirements that are necessary to carry out one's role as a 'good' citizen. Finally, and even more comprehensively, is the type of personality the citizen needs to underpin the qualities useful if the individual is to successfully act as a 'good' citizen.

The actual qualities useful to fulfill this task can be classified under these four components:

#### 1. The common good

Citizens have to come to some opinion as to what is in the best interests of their community and nation. This task involves the citizen becoming engaged with the issues and concerns of others in the society of which he/she is part. Apart from

interpersonal skills, empathy, compassion and a readiness to understand the others point of view would be useful. Democratic moral/ethical values such as justice, equality and respect would also be important as standards on which the citizen could make judgments. The respect of others and the belief in 'a fair go' is an Australian way of saying the same thing. Writing in cultural studies Hall [1993] considers that "...the capacity to live with difference...is the coming question of the 21st century." Krygier, in his 1997 Boyer Lectures, suggests that restraint, decency and civility are important in a flourishing democracy.

### **2. Motivation**

A personal morality that acts as a conscience is a strong motivating factor while the sense of belonging, of neighbourliness and brotherhood reinforce a sense of responsibility to others. In Australia, mateship has a similar connotation. Gaita [1999, p229], an Australian philosopher, describes social motives such as the love of neighbours, the impulse towards action, help, beneficence and the aspiration to leave the world a better place.

### **3. Action**

Tolerance, courage, social skills and a willingness to trust others that they will accept the action in good faith seem useful qualities for citizens to act with some purpose. The relaxed openness, acceptance of other people and adaptability are themes that Samways [1999] considers are themes of Australian society. Another Australian, Moira Raynor [1997] asserts that democracy is about debate, consultation and differences of opinion. It is also about commitment.

### **4. Personality**

Underlying these various qualities individuals would need to have a strong sense of an autonomous self yet be able to accept that they are dependent for their welfare on others (interdependent). Samways noted that Australians encourage independence yet help their mates when they need it. Self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth are, as I will demonstrate later, dependent on feeling secure in oneself. I have argued earlier in this chapter that a moral base is an important factor in the construction of the self providing the conscience that is both a guide and a motivation to act.

#### **4.6. Summary**

I have argued that 'good' citizens are:

- People who recognize that they have relationships in which they feel a sense of belonging to the society/nation as a whole, are able to trust their fellow citizens, who hold attitudes that value fairness, respect and concern for others and where they consider their land and the generations that will inherit their mantle.
- People who take an active, responsible role as they participate in their nation's future. They behave in accordance with the values noted above thereby assisting in the creation and maintenance of these values within their nation.
- People who take on an ethical attitude to their relationship and their role. The ethical principles being based on the preciousness of each individual human being. This principle leads to compassion, empathy, tolerance, respect, justice and cooperation.
- People, in order to achieve this mature responsibility need to develop a self that has a strong sense of self-worth and personal security, to have the skill and knowledge base required for social involvement; to be willing to reflect on their own biases and to find a balance between their autonomy needs and their dependence on others.
- People who can make a difference. "If 10% of the population were to take a consciously ethical outlook on life and act accordingly, the resulting change would be more significant than any change of government." [Singer, 1993, p279]

## **PART 2**

In which attachment is explained and its effects traced to adulthood, and moral development and cultural factors discussed.

## **Introduction to Part 2**

In Part 1 I set the scene within which I intend to consider the questions laid out at the beginning of the thesis. Chapters 5-9 will deal with the question of whether or not a secure attachment in infancy leads to the development of particular traits in adulthood. I will proceed by describing attachment theory, infant attachment styles and review the research on the long-term outcomes of secure attachment. After detailing some of the critiques of attachment theory I will argue the answer to the above question in a qualified affirmative. Concurrently I will provide an answer to the supplementary question: What factors influence the development of secure attachment? This will be accomplished by reviewing the research literature on parenting behaviour, social context and infant temperament.

This leads to the next question of whether or not there are parenting styles that build on secure attachment to develop valuable social attitudes. My aim is to show that a secure attachment facilitates the development of valuable social attitudes and that this is enhanced by the appropriate moral climate and the world view of the family. This part of the paper will end with a summary of the findings from these reviews listing a number of valuable attributes that frequently occur in adults who have experienced a secure attachment in infancy especially if this security is maintained into primary school years and is accompanied by an appropriate family context.

The list of attributes that are useful for Australians who desire to be 'good' citizens has been described in the previous two chapters. The most crucial part of the paper will then argue that there is a correlation between the lists developed. The final chapters discuss the implications of this hypothesis for the family and the community.

The following chapters will begin this journey by developing the argument that a secure attachment as a baby to a caregiver is the foundation for the development of many of these attributes that I have noted above.

In the last two chapters the discussion centred around interactions between the micro system of the individual citizen and the macro system of the world societies. In this part the point of interest is the interaction between the micro system of the parent and that of the child, bathed as they are in the meso and macro systems of family, culture and society.

The aim of the first part of this thesis was to seek out a set of ideal attributes which, if present in a citizen [to a greater or lesser degree], would add leverage to changes that could progress society to being more compassionate, cooperative and sustainable. The discussion was, inevitably, based on philosophical and sociological concepts. It had an idealistic, utopian bent searching for a 'gold standard' to use when measuring citizenly qualities.

This part has a more scientific, psychological aim- to discover, out of the current research findings, what attributes and qualities can be created or enhanced in their offspring by parental work. In particular it will assess whether the qualities, such as responsibility, empathy, concern for the future, autonomy and cooperation, found in the first part can be developed by a child growing up in a family or if these attributes are determined mainly through the influence of genetic inheritance or, alternatively, by extra-family sources like peers and educational institutions. Thus contrary to the first part I will take a more concrete, technical approach.

The first step seems to require a short summary of the principles of attachment theory along with an attempt to place the theory in the context of its history and the social conditions under which it remains relevant. I will follow that by arguing for the more fundamental proposition that parents have a strong influence on the outcome of their offsprings' development. Genetic inheritance, peer group pressure and extra family education have, of course, a significant effect, but I want to argue that the parental factors are usually primary. Having established this base, I want, then, to investigate the effects of infant attachment to the parents, the effect of family belief systems and the parental disciplinary practices on child development. At each state I will point to the relationship between particular parental practices and the maturation of specific citizenly qualities.



## CHAPTER 5. INFANT ATTACHMENT

### 5.1. Attachment Theory

John Bowlby created the concept of attachment outlined in the first volume of his trilogy *Attachment and Loss* in 1969. He had, in 1944 and 1952 written about his basic assumptions that children are born pre-adapted to become social without training [Bowlby, 1952b, p47] and that their experiences of interpersonal relationships are crucial to their psychological development [in Rutter, 1995]. In *Attachment and Loss: Volume 1* Bowlby described Harlow's research using baby monkeys, Spitz and others' work on maternal deprivation, his own clinical work with maladjusted children and his experiences as an expert working under the auspices of the World Health Organization with displaced, refugee children. His WHO monograph of 1952 led to major improvements in the care of children in hospitals and in residential orphanages [Rutter, 1995]. Bowlby demonstrated in that monograph, "...that the accessibility of parental figures is uniquely capable of sustaining children's feelings of security and used the term 'attachment' to refer to the responsible relational bonds." [1952b, p138]

Michael Rutter is a child psychiatrist who has a strong research background in fields other than attachment theory. He is the leading editor of the standard British textbook of child psychiatry [Rutter & Herzog, 1994]. He is, therefore, likely to be more objective in his judgements about attachment theory than those researchers working in the field. I will use his review of attachment concepts written in 1995 throughout this paper. His summary of Bowlby's trilogy makes five key points:

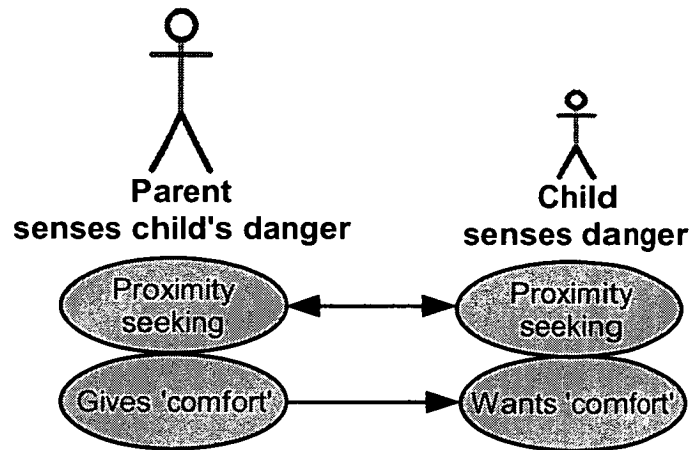
- "It differentiated attachment qualities of relationships from other aspects. Thus, it was noted that whereas anxiety increased attachment behaviour, it inhibited playful interactions." Care giving, disciplining and playing are some of the other forms of the parent-child relationship. To quote Main [1996] "An attachment behavioural system ... is responsible for the regulation of infant safety and survival in the environment of evolutionary adaptation...This system is usually formed by the time the child is seven months old and virtually all children become attached." She also points out that "The selection of attachment figures appears to be based on social interactions and signals a qualitative change in behavioural organization,

after which the infant tends to cry when attachment figures depart and to show pleasure on their return.”

- “The development of attachments were placed within the context of normal developmental processes and specific mechanisms were proposed. Most crucially, emphasis was placed on the role of attachment in promoting security and thereby, encouraging independence. The importance of this point lay in its differentiation from dependency.” It is not a stage to grow out of “...but rather a feature that should serve to foster maturity in social functioning.” [Rutter, 1996]
- “The process was seen as an intrinsic feature of human development as social beings and not a secondary feature learnt as a result of feeding.” [Rutter, 1996] Thus differentiating himself from the infantile sexuality hypothesized by Freud.
- “A mental mechanism, namely internal working models of relationships, was suggested as a means for both the carry forward of the effects of early attachment experiences into later relationships and also a mechanism for change.”[Rutter, 1996]
- Suggestions were made about the way “early attachments might play a role in the genesis of later psychopathology”. [Rutter, 1996]

In simple terms, in the presence of a secure base the child is free to explore, play and act creatively. The attachment relationship between the parent and child is activated when either the child senses danger (or is tired or hungry) or the parent/caregiver senses the child is in danger.

The child attempts to remain within a protective range of the parent. This range is reduced in strange or threatening situations. If the child perceives a threat to the accessibility of an attachment figure he/she will protest and actively attempt to reunite with that figure. [Weiss, 1991, p66] This is demonstrated in figure 5.1. .



*Figure 5.1. The attachment relationship*

These hypotheses have been critiqued and researched extensively. Some of the initial ideas have been amended and some remain controversial. Nevertheless as Rutter claims “..most of the key components...have received empirical support.” [1996] The hypotheses have become a comprehensive theory. Rutter’s main alterations to Bowlby’s original concepts are as follows:

- While Bowlby conceptualized a sensitive period in which attachment needed to occur further research shows “There is a sensitive period during which it is highly desirable that selective attachments develop but the time frame is probably somewhat broader than initially envisaged and the effects are not as fixed and irreversible as once thought.”
- Bowlby’s early writings suggested to readers that attachment developed to just one carer, usually the mother. It is now agreed that “..although there are very definite hierarchies in selective attachments, it is usual for most children to develop selective attachments with a small number of people who are closely involved in child care.”
- Finally it is now understood that though attachment style strongly influences the future development of the child it is not deterministic. Later events may change the course of attachment relationships.

Several issues have resulted in controversy. Some will be dealt with later in this chapter but it is appropriate to say something about one at this stage. There have been suggestions that Bowlby’s theory was constructed to fit a particular time and culture so that it is not relevant to other cultures or historical periods [see Riley,1983].

Newcombe and Lerner wrote of the historical context of Bowlby's theory of attachment. They point out that developmental continuity from birth to adulthood was assumed by 19th century European psychology. Freud added the idea that specific family experiences predisposed people to certain behavioural symptoms. [1982, p2] The first world war produced casualties who were diagnosed as 'shell shocked'. The causes of 'shell shock' were unknown and disputed. Ultimately most British psychiatrists of the time agreed that it involved the repression (a Freudian concept) of grief and loss. The controversy over the importance of infantile sexuality led Suttie in 1935 to "...emphasize love and companionship as being at least as important as the sexual instinct in the course of child development." He defined a neurotic as a "...sufferer of separation anxiety." [p6] Meanwhile Freud had also considered grief and loss and "...described the process of giving up attachment..." [p6]. Klein wondered if "...a normal child's experience of separating himself from his mother [had] parallels with the separation experienced by an adult [that they] undergo[es] in losing a loved person." [p8] Her work with children appeared to show a connection. Her papers on the subject were published in 1935 and 1940. Bowlby later acknowledged Klein's work as being a major contribution to his own. [p8] Bowlby's own early work in the late 1930s and early 1940s "...emphasized the role of early separation and loss...[especially in producing]...a type of thief called 'affection less'." [p10]. Newcombe's paper concludes that "...many of the hypotheses concerning the deleterious effects of mother-infant separation during a critical period in child development...had been developed [by Bowlby] by the late 1930s. Their roots went back further..." [p10].

Riley [1983] investigated the relationship between Bowlby's theories and the return of mothers to their homes after the second world war, that is, mothers who during the war had been engaged in wartime employment. She also, noted that Bowlby, Winnicott and others had been influenced by Klein prior to the war's outbreak.

Pronatalism was a movement where the emphasis was on increasing the birthrate. It involved "freeing mothers" from out of home employment so that they would be "free to bear more children". Riley points out that there were many lobby groups both for and against pronatalism, that the balance could have swung either way at many points, but having tipped in the direction of pronatalism it set up a feedback loop that accentuated one side of public opinion. Popular psychology emphasized the same cause. She

concludes that any relationship between Bowlby's theories and these developments is weak.

Nevertheless Newcombe alerts us "...to the possibility that the theory may be limited in generality or culture-bound." [Newcombe & Lerner, 1982, p11]. Further research has confirmed that cultural values determine the desirable behaviour for an infant to display [Harwood, 1992]. An example of cultural values influencing the development of desirable behaviour in children is given by Harwood when his research showed that "...Anglo-American mothers focus more on the characteristics associated with the presence of individuality," while Puerto Rican mothers "...place more emphasis on the child's ability to maintain proper demeanor in a public context." He points to "...the complex relations that exist between cultural meaning systems and attachment outcomes." For the purposes of this thesis the cultural and historical period that matters is present day Australia. Within Australian society there are a number of different ethnic, class and economically based cultures each of which will be reflected in the aspirations of parents for their child and in their child rearing methods. Harwood [1992] makes the point that

"...normal, desirable, valued degree of autonomy/dependence, of emotionality/self control, etc. will vary between these cultural and class based groups and will influence what is considered a 'good' or a 'poor' attachment. Security of attachment, on the other hand, is qualitatively different from these cultural norms. It is valued by most if not, all cultures."

## **5.2. Attachment Styles**

A stumbling block to further research on attachment theory was the absence of an objective test of the attachment relationship. This was resolved in large measure by Ainsworth when she introduced the Strange Situation Assessment (SSA). Mary Ainsworth worked with Blatz in Toronto prior to moving to England and meeting Bowlby. Blatz's theory of security predates Bowlby's and has many similarities. For example, he states that for the child "...there must be a familiar, trusted world from which the infant can foray, and to which he can always return." [Blatz, 1967, p39] and that "The trust the child learns to place in his early agent remains throughout life as the prototype of the confidence he will place later on in other agents and ultimately in himself." [p39]

Essentially Ainsworth's 20 minute assessment involves placing the infant in an unfamiliar place with an unfamiliar person and observing the infant's behaviour when the parent leaves the child alone and on their reunion after a few minutes [Ainsworth, Blehard, Waters & Wall, 1978]. The assessment was designed to examine the balance of attachment and exploratory behaviours under conditions of low and high stress [Bretherton, 1992]. Bowlby had considered that attachment behaviour would be triggered by fear-inducing situations [Macdonald, 1992]. While Blatz had recognized that a feeling of security encouraged curiosity [1967, p39]. Ainsworth designed her assessment with both these points in mind. Though it is a laboratory assessment, it is based on painstaking observation of infants and their mothers in the home setting over many months.

Using this assessment Mary Ainsworth and others have defined several types of separation and reunion behaviour in the tested infant which appear to show different styles of attachment security. Originally three styles were identified: secure; insecure-avoidant; and insecure-ambivalent. Later a disorganized style was added to the classification. This assessment has been used by various researchers to investigate the relationship between attachment styles in infants and features in the mothers, fathers and family and in the future development of the children exhibiting different attachment styles. The tests have been modified for use with preschool and primary school aged children while other assessments have been created to investigate the attachment styles of adults and adolescents. None of these tests is without controversy. The SSA is criticized because it may not be relevant in cultures where infant parent separation rarely occurs, such as in Japan [see Ujiie-Tastuo, 1984 for further opinion]. It is also open to the criticism that its brevity may fail to capture all the qualities of a child's attachment [Rutter, 1996]. Despite this, it has "...worked remarkably well" [Rutter, 1996; see also Kagan, 2000] and has been in widespread use in a number of different countries over a 20 year period.

A further confounding factor may be the inborn temperament of the child. Some infants appear to be more irritable and fussy than others. This seems to be influenced by genetic factors [Kagan, 1984, p60]. There is ongoing debate on this subject. For example Fox [1995] states that "In my opinion, individual differences in child temperament are a critical factor in the child's vulnerability or resilience to life events." While in rejoinder

van [van Ijzendoorn, 1995a] considers the role of temperament in the development of attachment security is still based on speculation. "It is unlikely that the predictive features of attachment security mainly reside in temperamental characteristics." [Rutter, 1987, p1275]

Temperament may not be purely the result of genetic factors. Variations in temperament have been noted between different cultures. Prior points out that "...Australian and U.S. infants' similarities may reflect cultures where sociability, extroversion and a positive outlook are values and encouraged." [Prior et al, 2000, p17] While "Rhythmicity's stability [as a temperamental trait over time].. may reflect stable family routines as well as 'innate' or inborn characteristics." [p15] A child's genetic endowment must, however, be included in the equation.

Parental training of the infant is also a factor. Already by 7 months old a child may be developing self-control and self-reliance under the influence of a mother who values these attributes [Kagan, p61] (see above comments on cultural desirability). A functional view of the attachment style an infant develops is that it is a coping strategy for him to survive in that particular family environment. From this perspective each infant will construct a unique strategic approach to their lives depending on the unique experiences they encounter within their family and on the temperamental characteristics they were endowed with. More inclusively like all psychological concepts attachment style is the result of a combination of biological and environmental factors.

Since attachment comes about within the context of a relationship, factors that prevent either the parent or the child entering fully into this relationship can seriously affect the child's attachment style. Parental factors that compromise the parent's ability to relate effectively include depression, illness, and the meaning and understanding of relationships they have developed, that is, their own attachment style. Genetic factors such as mental retardation may also affect their sensitivity to the infant's cues.

The child's capacity to gain the parent's attention include smiling, playing, crying and other vocalizations. These activities can be compromised if the child is handicapped by a genetic disorder, is premature, sustained trauma at birth or is ill. Finally the parent-child relationship occurs within a setting. The supportiveness or otherwise of this setting increases or decreases the possibility of secure attachment. An unsupported single

mother, a mother with an abusive, alcoholic or just plain disinterested husband, an insecure, unsafe environment as during war, calamity and poverty, can all reduce the likelihood of a secure attachment developing between mother and child.

Figure 5.2 below provides a summary of the factors affecting attachment.

<p>"Mother"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Genetic tendency</li><li>• Internal model of attachment</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Trauma, Illness, etc</li></ul> <p>Sensitivity to child</p>	<p>Child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Genetic tendency</li><li>• Temperament</li><li>• Natal problems</li><li>• Illness</li></ul>
<p>"Father" or other support persons</p> <p>Sensitive to mother and child</p>	

The quotation marks around "mother" and "father" imply that these roles are not gender related and can be filled by other carers such as foster mothers, grandparents and others.

*Figure 5.2. Factors affecting Attachment*

There are two way interactions between these three individuals as they influence the mother-child relationship.

Clearly a number of factors go to produce a particular attachment style in any specific infant. Some of these factors cannot, at present, be altered, for example, the genetic tendency and perhaps the infant's temperament. Others occur as unintended accidents, illness and other physical or psychological traumas. Some factors, however, are amenable to alteration through training, For instance, maternal sensitivity [e.g. van IJzendoorn et al, 1995; De Wolffe et al, 1997], psychotherapy aimed at altering the parents' internal working models [e.g. Muir, 1992] or altering social circumstances through support, availability of training, of financial assistance [e.g. Eastman,1989, p204; Erickson, 1997; Pound, 1996, p68] and social values such as valuing motherhood, fatherhood over economic success, desiring and therefore, seeking particular qualities in their infant's interactions.

### **5.3. Working Models**

Another issue is how a "...relationship quality becomes transformed into an individual characteristic." [Rutter,1995] Rutter makes two points in regard to this:



- “Continuity of environment is insufficient to explain the empirical findings.” [p554] This statement has been disputed by others and will be examined later.
- The infant develops an attachment relationship with more than one person, so, how do the different relationships interact? “The quality of a child’s relationship with one person is only weakly related to the quality of relationships with other people” [p554; see also van Ijzendoorn, 1995], so what is the effect of these differing attachments? The research is not yet available to answer this question however it seems plausible that a secure relationship with at least one individual will have some protective and positive effect.

The most common current view as to how the child internalizes the relationship qualities is the formation of an internal working model or representation. According to Zeanah and Barton [1989], “The function of internal representations is critical not only for imposing order on the vast array of experiences lived and potentially remembered, but also for providing a means for anticipating and interpreting future events.” They go on to say that “Working models function as unconscious guides to behaviour in relationships.” Others have suggested that “..we may devote most of our cognitive energy to explaining and understanding events that have already happened.” [Keil, 1998, p398] These understandings, then, help us in new situations to more effectively pick up information that we can use to guide our action [p399]. Either way it does lead to our behaviour in the here and now being predicated on our past experiences.

Heard [1982] said that “Representations of the self are [thus] unavoidably complex; furthermore they are integrated one with another and built up over time as some situations repeat themselves and new ones are encountered, a process analogous to the dynamic equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation as described by Piaget.”

This theory has not been superseded though the neuroscience involved may suggest a less rigidly representational model. Psychoanalysts such as Klein [Schmidt Neven, 1996, p35], Balint [1968], and Winnicott [1972], also postulated some form of dynamic internal representation of interpersonal relationships. Winnicott considered the growth of creativity and confidence was related to the experience of “good enough mothering”. The baby builds up an illusion that through his own activity his needs are satisfied. He can then tolerate carefully graduated failure on the mother’s part and so can cope with a gradual disillusionment without loss of confidence and trust [Heard,1978]. Bowlby

quoted Winnicott's elegant words making the case that every child has a right to a primary home experience:

“..without which the foundations of mental health cannot be laid down. Without someone specifically oriented to his needs the infant cannot find a working relation to external reality. Without someone to give satisfactory instinctual gratification the infant cannot find his body, nor can he develop an integrated personality. Without one person to love and to hate he cannot come to know that it is the same person that he loves and hates, and so cannot find his sense of guilt, and his desire to repair and restore. Without a limited human and physical environment he cannot find out the extent to which his aggressive ideas actually fail to destroy, and so cannot sort out the differences between fantasy and fact. Without a father and a mother who are together, and who take joint responsibility for him, he cannot find and express his urge to separate them, nor experience relief at failing to do so.”  
[Winnicott & Britton, 1946]

Winnicott's words written about 35 years ago can be compared with extracts from a lecture given by Peter Fonagy in 1999:

“..none of us is born with the capacity to regulate our own emotional reactions...The infant learns that arousal in the presence of the caregiver will not lead to disorganization beyond his coping capabilities...The infant's behaviour by the end of the first year is purposeful and apparently based on specific expectations.”

Thirty-five years of further infant observation and research has not substantially altered the wisdom of Winnicott's words. The child, then, has internalized expectations of at least some relationships, or perhaps, what is internalized is the regular repetition of patterns of behaviour within the relationships that matter to the child.

Neural pathways for the retention of these working models have been postulated and neuro-psychological research has partially confirmed them [Ledoux, 1998; Pinker, 1997; Schore, 1998]. Ledoux notes that there are caveats that prevent the mechanisms being deterministic. He explains that memory is selective and there is imperfect reconstruction of experience. He goes on to state that through:

“..the ability to rapidly form memories of stimuli...[a]...‘sculpting process’ occurs that prunes the neonatal brain's neurons and synaptic connections... [This process]...may be heavily influenced by the child's experiences, parental influences, schooling and other environmental influences as well as genetic programs...Non-optimal psycho-biological experiences in infancy induces a pruning of some neural networks, skew the developmental trajectory of others, affect the capacity of some receptors to work as

effectively and “stamp” on to some areas of the brain unpleasant experiences.” [Schoore, 1998]

Research is accumulating, claims Gabbard, which bears out the possibility that many of the infants early achievements including the formation of attachments may result from the efforts of the child to avoid anxiety [Gabbard, 1998]. Thus Mahoney [1991, p168] summarizing Bowlby [1988, p120] said “Private (and predominantly unconscious ) models of self, others and the world become increasingly firm ( resistant to change) with the confirmation of experience, and such confirmation tends to accelerate as the infant, child, adolescent and adult become more active and effective participants in selecting and creating their own environments.”

Internal working models of the attachment relationship have, therefore, a neurological base and can be considered as an important ingredient in the complex mental processes involved in our understanding of self and the world. This will be discussed further in a later chapter. Similarly, the controversy that surrounds the basic assumption that parents are the main influence on the growing child I will leave to the next chapter. It only remains for me to describe the differences in securely attached and insecurely attached children before summarizing the arguments made in this chapter.

#### ***5.4. Security and Insecurity***

Sroufe [1983, p119] captures the essence of the differences between security and insecurity:

“The securely attached infant can stay organized in the face of stress, directly expresses affect, and may smoothly regain equilibrium given support from trusted persons. The ambivalent/resistant infant has a low threshold for threat, becomes quickly disorganized, and cannot readily regain equilibrium. The avoidant infant has already learnt to guard against strong affect, expresses affect indirectly, and avoids contact when it is most needed.”

Figure 5.3. demonstrates the balance between contact with the environment and with attachment figures achieved by securely attached children in comparison with avoidant children who tend to avoid attachment figures and concentrate their attention on the environment and ambivalent children who are unwilling to venture away from their attachment figure.

<i>ENVIRONMENT</i>		<i>ATTACHMENT FIGURE</i>
25%	65%	10%
<i>Insecure / Avoidant</i>	<i>Secure</i>	<i>Insecure / Ambivalent</i>
(A)	(B)	(C)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on environment</li> <li>• Denies negative emotions</li> <li>• Does not display negative emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openly displays negative emotions</li> <li>• After comfort can explore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizes negative emotions</li> <li>• Unable to be comforted</li> </ul>

Percentages are the proportions found in American and European populations. [Thompson,1998, p44].

Letters are the abbreviations given to the styles.

*Figure 5.3. Strange Situation Classification [after van IJzendoorn,1998]*

Perhaps the most important attribute of secure attachment for my purposes is the infant's ability to use the sense of security that the presence of an attachment figure provides to explore their external and internal environments. The avoidant child will explore over a wide range but fail to use this experience creatively while the exploration of an ambivalent infant is severely curtailed. [Holmes, 1993, p105]

### **5.5. The Parents' Part**

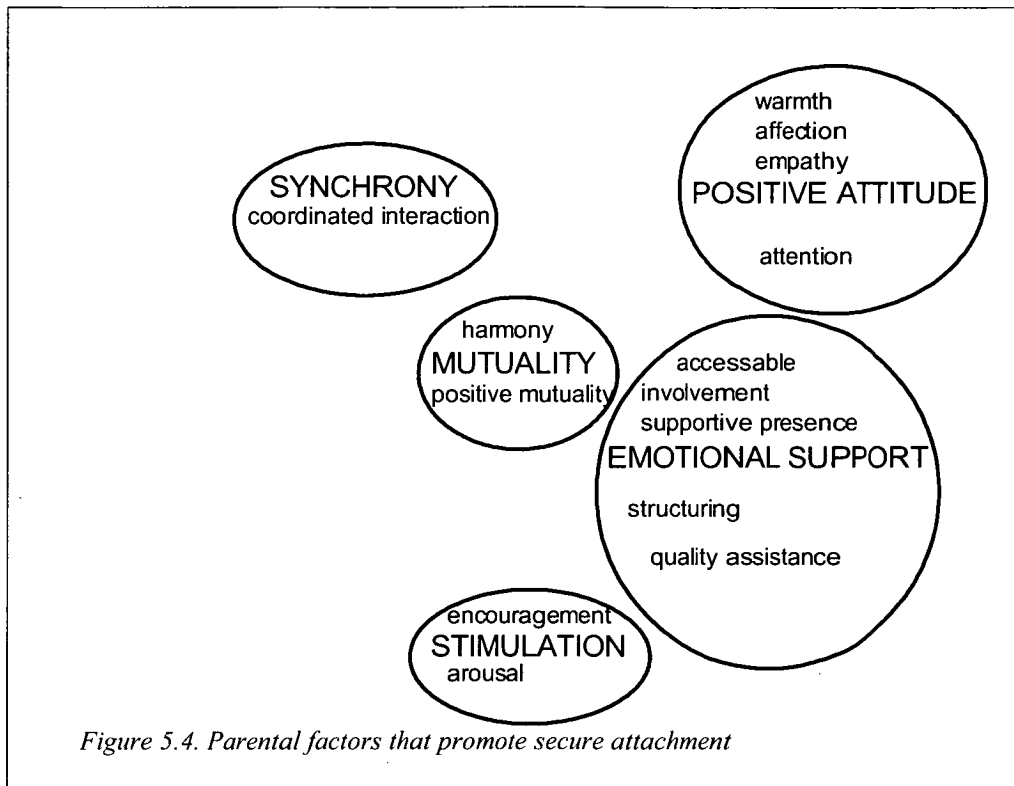
Parental sensitivity and responsiveness to the infant's signals have been strongly correlated with the security of infant attachment. Training mothers to become more sensitive to their baby's cues has been found to improve the degree of secure attachment in controlled trials. [van IJzendoorn et al, 1995b; De Wolff & van IJzendoorn, 1996; Erickson, 1997]

Intrusiveness, that is, stimulating the baby to respond to the adult when the baby is content to play, watch or dream on its own, is considered a sign of poor adult sensitivity [Erickson,1997]. It seems that secure attachment involves the parent being protective when the child needs it and being passively present when the child is happy to explore and play on his own. Repeating an analogy used earlier, attachment may be likened to a telephone cable connecting the infant and parent that the child uses to ring for assistance when needed. The parent acts on or fails to act on this call while the rest of the time the cable lies dormant. At times the parent may anticipate the infant's call. As the child

grows and develops so the cable lengthens till they are out of earshot. The parent's only way then of anticipation is intuition yet the child's signals of concern, that is, seeking an attachment figure, anxious and apprehensive appearance, running towards, crying, and such like remain. It is, perhaps, this balance between active support and passive watchfulness, that permits the development of secure autonomy rather than dependence. This idea is captured by Winnicott's phrase "holding the baby in the mind." [1964]

Warmth is a related dimension of parenting which seems separate from but closely linked to sensitivity [MacDonald,1992] Warmth, defined as positive affection, is considered by MacDonald as a separate, though related factor from parental sensitivity in the socialization of the child. He notes that "Bowlby proposed that attachment was closely intertwined with the fear system.." and that the Strange Situation Assessment "..was designed to test the infant's reaction to maternal separation in a fear-inducing situation". Warm affectionate responses are, on the other hand, rewarding. Learning occurs when specific behaviours are rewarded as well as when others are punished or ignored. "The affectional system motivates behaviour partly by facilitating the transmission of parental values and culture. As a result, a child may be motivated to refrain from drug use or to work diligently in school in order to preserve a relationship based on reciprocal affection." [MacDonald, 1992] Some cultures show less warmth and affectionate behaviour towards the child despite the presence of accurate sensitivity and timely responsiveness. Gender also affects the degree of warmth demonstrated. However, though sensitivity can occur without warmth, sensitivity appears to be present in all situations so far researched where warmth is expressed. [MacDonald,1992] Research in this area remains to be done but it appears that the correlation between warmth and sensitivity is high in Western societies. It could be a confounding factor in the complexities of predicting behavioural outcomes of secure attachment especially relevant to transcultural research.

The following diagram, Figure 5.4, illustrates some of the above points. This figure is modified from De Wolff and van IJzendoorn [1995b] and helps to show the relationship between the various factors that seem important in parental behaviour that assists the development of attachment. "The original concept of sensitivity may not capture the only mechanism through which the development of attachment is shaped." [van IJzendoorn, 1995b]



Finally, the other relational systems between parents and children must be mentioned. Care giving, disciplining, and playing together are all important, and separate aspects of parenting [Rutter, 1995]. Co-relations between them however, remain poorly researched. Joint play is valuable to a child's learning. Discipline is required to teach a child self-control and conformity. [Schmit Neven, 1996] Discipline will be considered later as an important feature of moral development.

## **5.6. Summary**

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate the fundamental principles of attachment theory as it is observed in the relationships between infants and parents and in the level of security within the child himself. I have pointed to some of the major controversies in the field noting the need for further research in some areas to confirm empirically the theoretical constructs. The propositions this thesis is based on were presented in Chapter 2.

Parts of four of these have been considered in this chapter. I have provided evidence to suggest that:

- Infant attachment is a fundamental aspect of development.
- Infants cope with this survival requirement in the particular situation into which they are born. How they handle that situation provides a standard by which future relationships are met.
- Attachment styles can be classified into 3 or 4 groupings that have some stability over early childhood. The style begins to “gel” in the pattern of the infant-parent relationship.
- Infants with a secure attachment style are more likely than insecurely attached infants to explore their environment. The children who feel secure in their relationships are at liberty to explore these close relationships and begin to understand the ‘other’. They can explore and experiment with the various roles they play in these relationships and start to create their beliefs about themselves. They can also begin to internalize the attitudes towards themselves and others that are valued by the important people in their lives.

Evidence has also been presented to argue that parents play a vital role in the style of attachment their infant creates. A secure infant is most likely to have a warm, sensitive parent. Parents are more able to carry out the tasks of parenting successfully if they, themselves feel secure in their current life situation.

## CHAPTER 6. DO PARENTS MATTER?

### **6.1. Introduction**

Parents are important to children but are they overrated? They contribute genetically to their offspring, but does their behaviour with and around their children have a long lasting effect? Some developmentalists do not believe they do. They point to evidence to the contrary. Another issue is whether or not there is a lasting effect from early childhood experiences. This chapter discusses the extent of continuity of early parental influences on the growing child.

Developmentalists and psychologists distinguish at least two forms of this continuity/discontinuity debate. On the one hand there is disagreement around the idea that there may be some skills and behaviours that are useful at one point in life's development but then are no longer required at a later time. A second debate concerns the presence or otherwise of life stages. Many developmental theorists have recognized and proposed that development proceeds in a step-like progression. Freud, Piaget and Erikson are just three of the most well known stage based theorists. [see for example Mahoney, 1991, p148-155 for comparisons of these and other theorists stage theories].

Most of those who study child development assume that there is some continuity in that development, but then a further question arises as to whether discrete events in childhood are influential or whether the continuity of a similar environment is the only important experience? For example, does the early relationship that a child has with a parent influence long term outcome or is it only important if the style of relating remains similar over a period of many years? This leads to the final question for this chapter. What mechanisms can be identified to explain the effect of past environments on current behaviour?

This chapter will review some of the literature around these issues and suggest that the bulk of evidence agrees with the proposition that early childhood experience can influence later outcomes and that parents do in fact, matter. Some recent research suggesting that neurobiological changes may be one of the possible ways that influence is perpetuated, will also be considered.



## **6.2. Arguments for Continuity**

Kagan used the analogy of the way faces change from infancy to middle-age to illustrate how an underlying continuity can be present despite ongoing change. He argued that “..it is possible to detect faces that belong to particular infants and adults because the pattern of differences between the faces has been preserved over the intervening years.” [Kagan, 1987, p1181] He calls this form of continuity “lawful transformation” because change is occurring under a set of rules that maintain some continuity. This idea that, though changes occur with growth and maturation, a basic organization or pattern continues to be discernible is congruent with many of the most up-to-date theories of child development. Newman [1977] has also emphasized the point that some level of continuity is required. He states that “The study of child development emphasizes the nature and direction of growth and change. However, we could not be aware of differences if they did not occur against a background of continuity.”

The knowledge gained and skills acquired are not lost so much as overlain. New experiences modify, adjust and temper the past but don’t extinguish it. Elegant studies of the development of infant walking are a good example of this continuity. Stepping is a primitive reflex present in the newborn but it appears to disappear prior to the toddler learning to walk. Research, however, has determined that there is a smooth transition from this primitive set of movements to walking when changes to body weight, centre of gravity and muscle power are taken into account [Spelke; Newport, 1998, p240].

The 1998 edition of *The Handbook of Child Psychology* devoted most of the first volume to various theories of human development. Many of these theories espouse a holistic, emergent and self-organizing model. [Lerner, Damon, Cairns, Thelen, etc] For example, Thelen and Smith use a mountain stream as a metaphor to depict behavioural development as a process constructed by its own history and system wide activity [1998, p569]. They point out that:

“Behaviour is the product of multiple, contributing influences, each of which itself has a history. But just as we cannot disentangle the geologic history of the mountain from the current configuration of the stream bed, we also cannot draw a line between real-time behaviour and the lifetime processes that contribute to it.” [p569]

They continue by saying that “Development can only be understood as a multiple, mutual and continuous interaction of all the levels of the developing system, from the molecular to the cultural...Development can only be understood as nested processes that unfold over many time scales, from milliseconds to years” [p563]. Thus they argue that the

“..dynamic view means that there must be continuity among the components of the system both internally and externally, and among the time scales over which the system lives... [noting that] ...Contemporary discoveries of brain organization and function are highly consistent with these dynamic principles.” [p600]

They, along with the others whose models are similar, consider the history of the individual is a necessary factor in current functioning. Maturana, whose theory has many similarities to those noted above, writes that “Each time in a system that a state arises as a modification of a previous state, we have a *historical phenomenon*.” [1988, p57 their italics] We build on our past.

Kagan makes some assumptions in his understanding of development-

- “1. The mind continually evaluates the relation of ongoing experience to its immediately prior states-cum-knowledge.
2. It attempts to remove the differences when there is a noticeable discrepancy between the two evaluations.” [1987, p1153]

In Maturana’s theory the organism changes its internal organization to fit with the different signals it has received in order to continue to survive as a whole being. [1988, p42] Here Kagan and Maturana agree that change occurs by a reorganization of a previous state.

Rutter makes a similar point regarding the importance of history. He states that “At any one point, a person’s behaviour may be most strongly influenced by current environments but the very fact that the individual is in that particular environment will be influenced by the person’s earlier behaviour and experiences.” [1987, p1285]

Applying a nativist approach that assumes some inherited structures, Spelke describes “core structures” that anticipate function, for example, stepping occurs before walking. She suggests that these “core capacities” can be constant over time and act as building blocks for later development. [1998, p283-4] Thus, inherited potentials, either genetic

or through other means, can act in conjunction with environmental influences to steer the individual along a trajectory that seems seamless.

Finally, Overton in his analysis of developmental psychology said that “When a relational methodological understanding emerged, questions such as whether stages exist (transformational change, discontinuity, sequence) or are absent (variational change, continuity) in cognitive/affective/ social developments simply disappear.” [1998, p114] The skills and behaviour acquired at one point in development become the foundations for future skills and behaviour. They are not forgotten or lost rather they are incorporated into something more complex. This understanding of continuity allows for differences in the attachment behaviour as a child matures, although the same attachment style might underlie both behaviours. [Grossmann et al, 1999, p767]

Another type of continuity concerns the idea that development can occur as a smooth transition rather than a series of discontinuous leaps. In this case, the existence of stages is disputed although some theories allow for apparently discontinuous development. Developmental theories that incorporate complex dynamic systems such as those mentioned above can involve “discontinuous jumps of levels like stages.” [Fischer & Bidell, 1998, p485] Furthermore, catastrophe models of dynamic systems have shown to predict jumps in behaviour analogous to shifts between stages. [Thelen, 1998, p576]

Seen through the lenses of these systems, relational, and holistic models of change and growth, child development appears as a continuum. Just as my facial features have changed smoothly and gradually over the years yet there remains something that continues to be recognizably me, similarly our psychological features also change imperceptibly from infancy onwards yet always develop under the constraints of how our past has structured us and under the limitations obtaining within our present situation. There is, then, a degree of continuity that is maintained over time despite growth, biological maturation and changes in the proximal and distal environments.

### **6.3. The Case for Discontinuity and Some Replies**

Kagan is a trenchant critic of the level of continuity most developmentalist accept as occurring. He explains that:

“All current theories that posit a structural connection between early childhood and adult life are essentially hypotheses about possible histories...The theorist determines which phenomena are structurally related

by the plausibility of the reasons given for the relations noted. But these reasons, as well as the initial selection of phenomena, are guided by assumptions that are not always made explicit.” [1984 p84]

Kagan continues by describing the arguments in favour of connectedness, each of which he dismisses as illusion, or the effect of habit, social programming or Western values influencing people’s understanding [p88]. The arguments he advances against connectedness revolve around the concept that “Each life phase makes special demands, and so each phase is accompanied by a special set of qualities. Succeeding phases have different set of demands; hence, some of the past is inhibited or discarded.” He gives the example that “The demands of the first two years are so different from those of later childhood and adolescence that one might expect many of the qualities of the early period to disappear and leave no trace of their temporary ascendancy.” [1984, p91] With this argument Kagan suggests that attachment behaviour may be a necessary part of infancy but in later life, when as an adult one makes relationships with peers rather than parents, it has become outmoded [1987].

This type of discontinuity is seen in adolescence when biological changes occur that are quite different from those in earlier childhood. Geneticists have shown that genes can be turned on and off at different points in one’s life. This awareness adds some credence to those who consider this form of discontinuity is important. Kagan [1984] is one who argued that each stage is discrete and discontinuous from the preceding ones.

In the previous section I noted the arguments against this concept. It may be that while there are clearly cognitive changes over one’s life, clear cut stages may be an artifact. A similar issue arises with the concept of multiple selves. Some psychologists and theorists recognize that people perform differently in different settings. There is a discontinuity between the person in one context from them in the next. Yet most of us consider ourselves to be a coherent being with a historical continuity. In a fact, the Multiple Personality, whose selves are dissociated from each other, is usually considered pathological [Baltes et al, 1998, p1106].

Kagan [1984] describes “...four major conditions for change...[that]...assume[s] differential potency during successive periods of development.” [p92] These are:

5. Genetically programmed changes in the central nervous system;
6. The normative regimes of a particular culture. e.g. schooling;

7. Historical events that affect the whole society but are most influential on adolescents and adults; and
8. Unexpected or unpredictable events.

In the preface to *Social Development* [1996] Schaffer comments on the recent dramatic changes in the field:

“..the finding that the relationship between child rearing practices and children’s psychological attributes is at best tenuous and that the former cannot therefore predict the latter with any degree of certainty;...the growing influence of behavioural genetics, with its demonstration of the marked effects that inherited aspects can under certain conditions exert on children... A major rethink is necessary.” [pxv]

Schaffer clearly has similar concerns to Kagan regarding continuity. However, by the end of his book he is suggesting a transactional model of development with three aspects:

1. “The characteristics that children bring to the business of development as part of their inherited endowment;
2. The identity and nature of the environmental forces that help to shape the developmental course; and
3. The way in which these sets of influences interact and determine the eventual outcome.”[p391]

The first two factors include Kagan’s conditions that promote change but Schaffer points out that the third aspect remains poorly identified. “The nature of this connection remains to be spelt out.” [p393] Thus Schaffer is positing that the dynamic relation between nature and nurture is important in determining the trajectory of development. This relationship changes as the child grows, sometimes nature may be in ascendancy whilst at other times nurture might be the more important factor. That relationship may also be affected by the particular aspect of growth that is being studied, for example, certain physical characteristics may be more defined by inheritance while the environment may be more important in the development of cognitive processes. [Berk, 1997] This view is in keeping with the developmental models discussed earlier. “Modern syntheses of contributions from cognitive, developmental, and systems sciences have begun to suggest that the processes of change that comprise knowledge restructuring reflect dynamic tensions and opponent processes.” [Mahoney, 1991, p152]

Mahoney following Maturana suggests that “..the self-organizing system seeks a ‘moving balance’ between familiarity and novelty.” [p152] Later in this chapter I will consider how the long-term developmental course of an individual can be affected by early childhood experiences.

There are, of course, an almost infinite number of factors and experiences that make up the adult person. Inherited genetic factors are modified, turned on, off and adjusted by the organisms accommodation to and adaptation of its continually changing environment from the moment of conception. This is Kagan’s first point in the four major conditions he posits for change. [see also Plomin & Rutter, 1998] There are, however, some environmental factors that are more universal and more continuous in a particular socio-cultural community. It is generally agreed, for instance, that parents, family and school have a profound effect on the developing child. This reflects Kagan’s second condition. In fact the project of child-rearing would be senseless unless the child was motivated to learn and its environment was conducive to such learning.

The deterministic hypothesis that experiences in early infancy strongly determine adult personality is clearly hotly disputed. But even if early childhood experiences only fairly weakly determine the outcome in individuals, they remain a potent force when considering large populations. Rutter [1987, p1262] argued that “It is possible for an environmental influence to have a very substantial effect in raising the mean level of an outcome variable without it making much, if any, difference to individual variation.” My argument that infant attachment style is an important factor in the way adults behave, does not mean that a particular individual will certainly be a ‘good’ citizen because as an infant he experienced a secure attachment. On the other hand, taken in aggregate, securely attached children are more likely to develop into ‘good’ citizens than those whose were insecurely attached. I hope to show over the next few chapters that once a particular trajectory is established in infancy there is a tendency for that path to be maintained. In fact, the growing child tends to construct a world where the favoured path can be more easily maintained and where influences are cumulative; like compound interest they increase exponentially.

Even babies need some guiding principles to direct their attention. Some of these guides are genetic. For example, very young babies attend to the human face rather than other objects within their sight. The brain is preset, prewired if you like, to seek out, pay

attention to and respond to some aspects of their surroundings rather than others [Stern, 1998, p87-88]. From before birth priorities are set. Experience builds on these foundations. Learning broadens, deepens and stretches our innate tendencies. As noted in Chapter 5, animal experiments even show that pre-birth and neonatal experiences modify later behaviour and the neural network within the brain. [Schoore, 2001]

Summarizing the continuity/discontinuity debate, I quote Kail who states that “..early development is related to later development but not perfectly..” [1998, p16] Similarly, Lerner comments that “Neither continuity nor discontinuity is absolute.” [1998, p6] I agree that there is no element of determinism in the claim that early experiences are formative. The claim though, has a solid backing from most contemporary developmental psychologists.

#### **6.4. *Environmental Continuity***

There are at least two possible mechanisms through which early attachment can influence later personal attributes. The first is an internal working model or representation of attachment relationships that is activated in similar relationships in adult life which I have discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3. The other possibility is that the family relationships and structure that permitted the styles of attachment to develop in the first place are maintained over time so that the growing child continues to experience the same type of parent-child relationships.

Kagan is one who considers that the latter is the most likely reason for any evidence of continuity over time of personal qualities. “It is reasonable to suggest that these different outcomes in adulthood are due to the maintenance of their respective environments for three decades..” he claims when noting that a middle class three year old with an unusually large vocabulary is more likely to become a successful lawyer than is a working class three-year old who has just begun to speak [1984, p99]. His illustrative example seems an extreme case.

As I noted in Chapter 5 Rutter believes that this continuity of environment is “..insufficient to explain the empirical findings.” [1995, p554] Here, again, there are disputes among the authorities. It is probably not possible to provide convincing evidence for either position at this stage. The research results remain ambiguous and can be used to bolster either alternative. Elder points out that “One wonders how behavioral

continuities and changes among children can be understood without temporal measures of their environment.” He continues by pointing out that there have been few studies that examine the consistency of environment over time. [1998, p967] Empirical studies are obviously required. Kagan said that “..we shall just have to wait and see.” [1984, p96]

What can we say in the meantime? My own position is influenced by Rutter’s belief quoted above. This thesis is based on the assumption that early childhood experience has an importance over and above the consistency of the child’s environment across the major part of the child’s life. I will back this belief up later in the chapter when I discuss early neurological development.

### **6.5. The Importance of Parents**

Even if one were to acknowledge the evidence that early childhood influences are of importance in eventual adult outcomes, it has become necessary to question the role parents play. This enquiry becomes a requirement as a result of the apparent minimization of the influence of parents in some contemporary literature. The reduced role for parents is exemplified by such items as: *Are Mothers Necessary?*- a TV series and book [Mullen, 1987]; and in the title of the last chapter in an earlier book by Schaffer [1977] *Mothering -Do Babies Need Mothers?*.

The role of siblings, peers, family friends and neighbours as well as the part played by genetic inheritance and schooling is emphasized in recent research. Parents especially mothers, have been displaced from the primary place they held in the development of children’s personality. The pendulum has swung from the assumptions made by Freud and others [see Bretherton, 1991 for a historical summary] at the end of the 19th century that early childhood experience with the mother was a major element in determining future personality, to the present day belief in a balance of positive and negative determinants, none of which are dominant. [see for example Lerner, 1998, p2].

Rutter [1995] is one of many authorities who notes that it is generally accepted that children’s experiences of interpersonal relationships are crucial to their psychological development. Kagan, on the other hand, considers the main ingredients in determining the way children turn out are: their birth order; the social class into which they are born; and the temperament they inherit [2000]. I suggest that each of these features directly



influence the way parents interact with their child, especially during the early years of their lives. I find it difficult to conceive of alternative mediating factors. It is easier in statistically based research to identify and use such factors as birth order, social class and even temperament than to evaluate interpersonal relationships. For this reason the implication that these factors are not connected to the parent-child relationship is not compelling. For instance, a co-relation between birth order and outcome does not exclude the possibility that a mediating factor is not the differences in the parent-child relationship as a result of the different birth order.

In the last chapter I noted that it has been argued that attachment theory may be confined to a particular culture and historical setting. The argument is made that, perhaps, the dominant ideology of the time, the one income-earning, two parent nuclear family, favoured attachment theory's concentration on the essential nature of the mother-child bond. Now, this argument continues, in what is believed to be a more enlightened age, attachment may be an outdated concept.

An alternative approach might be to accept that all research and theoretical model building is structured by the historical and cultural context in which it occurs. Bradley states in his book *Visions of Infancy* that:

“This book has undertaken to show that there can be no ‘empirical’ observations of babies that do not imply an evaluation of the vision of infancy;...Central to my argument is the belief that human behaviour, including infant behaviour, is radically *ambiguous*. ...Behaviour not only has meaning, but it makes many different sorts of sense, depending on how one views it.” [1989, p3, his italics]

Just as attachment theory fitted the time of its original conception so too, it could be argued, do today's theories and the research on which they are based. There are many ideological, social and economic pressures in today's society that tend to downplay the importance of parenting and mothering. The institution of the family itself has been criticized by feminists [e.g. Oakley, 1986; Friedan, 1963 ] and Marxism [e.g. Eastman, 1989, px]. Many families require two incomes to maintain their standard of living, many women want the satisfaction and status of a career, parents prioritize their own needs over those of their children as shown by the high divorce and remarriage rates, their frequent moves of job and abode [Hochschild, 1997, p6; for a review of the changes in families over the last 50 years see Martin et al, 2000].

Hochschild's research [1997, p40] pointed to the increased satisfaction of work and decreased enjoyment in home life which, she said, sets up a vicious cycle that squeezes time out of life at home. Parents react to this "Time Bind" by organizing their home life using management techniques learnt through work, that is, planning, sequencing time, becoming more efficient, delegating and outsourcing (housework, childcare, cooking, etc.). A search in the local public hospital library that caters for all health professionals includes in its collection books with such titles as: *The Time Trap* [Mackenzie, 1993]; *Executive Time Management* [Reynolds; Tranel, 1988]; *The One Minute Manager* [Blanchard & Oncken, Burrows, 1990]; *60 Seconds Stress Management* [Goliszek, 1993]; *How to Gain An Extra Hour every Day* [Josephs, 1992].

There are two copies of "*Balancing Home and Career*" in which one is advised to read "*401 Ways to get your Kid to Work at Home*" [Conrad, 1996]. It includes a check list for home that incorporates: What can I delegate? What expectations eliminate? What expectations do I need to communicate? What tasks can I teach someone? Some of my work can be done by... . It also lists ten ways your child can develop a sense of character and independence, a euphemism for teaching them to take responsibility. Children are being asked to grow up fast.

Hochschild notes the increasing number of 'latchkey' children, some as young as 6 years old staying at home alone after school. She quoted a book entitled *Work won't love you back: a dual career couple's survival guide*. In this book Chapter 9 is titled "Where do the Children fit in?". Early in the chapter, the Benjamin Spock concept that the amount of time with a child is not as important as quality is noted. Of this, Hochschild said that "Quality time holds out the hope that scheduling intense periods of togetherness can compensate for the overall loss of time in such a way that the relationship will suffer no loss of quality." [p50] However, quality time is scheduled by the parent but may not fit with the child's rhythms or needs. The demand is for the child to fit in. They are asked to consider their parent's needs, to down play or ignore their own. Paradoxically, later in the chapter of the quoted book, while discussing day care options, parents are advised to look for a child carer who is nurturing and "...has *plenty of time* to spend with your child." [my italics]

These examples underline the changes in childcare since attachment theory was first publicized. It would seem that now a substantial number of parents contract out the care

of their offspring to paid carers. Governments aid and abet them in this enterprise. Many researchers, of course, attempt to be objectively seeking scientific facts but the motivation for the particular lines of research undertaken and the way results can be analysed is based on unconsciously held cultural and ideological assumptions. Some researchers are working parents. They may, without being aware of it, be biased in their interpretations of their results. On the other hand my bias is revealed when I explain that both my wife and daughter were full-time mothers until their children were well into high school. Bradley's [1989] point that infant behaviour is essentially ambiguous that I quoted earlier is relevant here. There is a gap between specific behaviours and the meanings we attach to them.

A good example of the way different researchers make meaning out of 'empirical facts' is the book by Harris entitled *The Nurture Assumption: Why children turn out the way they do* [1998]. She reviewed research going back many decades and came to the conclusion that it had all been analysed incorrectly. In her view, it had been assumed that parents are important and the facts were made to fit that assumption. Her book argues, fairly persuasively, that in her analysis, the facts better fit a view that a combination of genetic inheritance and peer group experience is what is important in the development of personality. Her motivation for developing this critique, she said, is that she felt she had been a good mother to her family yet her daughter had been a very difficult teenager.[p95] She wants, she said, to stop the blaming of mothers and allay their feelings of guilt. In a review of her book Williams notes that:

"One reason for her meteoric ride to prominence is the substantial emotional appeal of her thesis that 'parents don't matter as much as peers' to today's parents. The popular press seized on this aspect of the story and took the whole "parents don't matter' ride, giving readers from coast to coast the license they sought to ignore their children and not worry too much about ignoring them...Parents feel guilty about how their kids turned out; Harris's message relieves the guilt." [1999, p268]

These are understandable reasons as to why such ideas are popular. As Williams suggests they fit a climate of parents feeling guilty that they neglect their children, yet as reasons they are not objective or impartial motivations for research or advice. The same criticism can be levelled at Harris, as was levelled at attachment theory in the past. Having argued that the effect of parenting on the infant has been minimized in recent times, perhaps for socio-political reasons, I now want to return to the factors Kagan

[2000] identifies as having been shown to be important influences in child development in empirical studies, that is, inherited temperament, social class and birth order.

### **1. Inherited Temperament**

Twin studies show that genetics account for 50% of a person's personality traits [Bouchard & McGue, 1990]. Therefore, environment must account for the other 50%. Harris [1998, p147] proposes that peer group experiences account for that 50%; while Sulloway [1996] subscribes to the view that sibling interactions and competition for their parents' resources are the main factors.

But even if these propositions turned out to be correct, personality as defined by these researchers is not the whole person anyway. Personality has been defined and tested for in a variety of ways. One method commonly employed uses the dimensions of: extroversion/ introversion; anxious/stable; agreeable/antagonistic; careful/careless; daring/conforming; and sometimes open/non-open [Leeson & Heaven, 1999; Borgatta & Lambert, 1968, p388]. These dimensions do not provide a full picture of a person. They do not, by themselves, for example, tell us if a person is generous or mean, trustworthy or a cheat, confident or despairing of their self worth, whether they believe the world to be a reasonable or irrational place or whether they think that people in general tend to be kindly, antagonistic or indifferent. How we behave will depend on these as well as other factors. Whether or not these other factors have an inherited component, they are all influenced by our upbringing. Our personality may interact with, influence and modify our beliefs and values but does not determine them.

The attributes a child brings from their genetic inheritance also influence the way the parents interact with their children. The parent's own personality, developed through the interaction of their genetic makeup and their life experience will be a factor. Harris acknowledges the former but seems to consider the parents' experiences irrelevant. Parents do influence their children and their children's future by hoping, desiring, modeling, interacting, and teaching, as well as the more practical considerations like choosing where to live and to which school, club, etc. to send their child that Harris claims is all that parents can provide [1998, p335].

## 2. Social Class

The second factor Kagan discusses as a major factor in the development of personality is social class. However social class is not a single element. In fact, the whole concept of class is in dispute. Most researchers use some form of socioeconomic status (SES) to classify people's position in society. It is made up of multiple components including the levels of wealth or poverty, availability of resources, and the education levels and occupations of parents, to name a few. Each social class or SES, furthermore, has particular cultural practices and beliefs. Each of these factors are experienced by the infant and young child through the medium of the family. In Chapter 2 I illustrated a child's development with a modification of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model. He defines the outer shell of his model as "The exosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives." [Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p1017] Social class is part of this setting that only indirectly affects the infant according to this definition.

The way the parents understand parenting, their expectations of their children's behaviour, their intentions in child rearing will all be affected by their SES and will affect their relationships with their children. For example, Kasser quoted research that shows children from lower SES backgrounds tended to concern themselves with materialistic values and were less likely to focus on values reflecting autonomy, relatedness and growth. His own research results "...suggest the impact of childhood SES on adult restrictive conformity values is at least partially mediated by parental restrictiveness". This supports, Kasser said, Kohn's belief that such strategies are inculcated in children because they are more adaptive for the types of jobs and experiences these children are likely to have [2002]. Many researchers, including Harris, control for social class in their analysis of the results. This strategy brings to the fore, in their results, other causal factors while ignoring the importance social class has on infant-parent relationships. It also prevents the measurement of the proportion of securely attached children in a particular class. I agree with Harris [1998, p335 & 387] that

once the child is old enough to attend school or childcare, social class will have a direct effect on the child's development but, by that time the child has had a solid initiation into social behaviour and a mental working model has begun to be laid down.

### **3. Birth Order**

The third factor to discuss is the influence of birth order. Sulloway [1996] and Dunn [1990] have researched this area and concluded that birth order and spacing have some effect on the eventual personality of the individual. Parkes et al [2000] suggest that these factors may have long-term effects. "[A] number of factors such as birth order and birth spacing appear to play an important role in determining the relative level of competency and balance between leader/follower roles in sibling relationships.." [p 41]. No doubt the interplay of parents and their children within the family have some shaping influence. This subject will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

In summary, parents influence their children by their behaviour in their interactions with them and in their children's observations of their interactions with others around them.

Parents in turn are affected by:

1. Their social class;
2. Their personality;
3. Their life experiences; and
4. Their child's behaviour, health, gender and birth.

All of these factors go towards determining the relationships they and their child create.

In this section I have argued that there has been a de-emphasis on the parental influences on child development. Partly this may be explained by recent changes to society determined by cultural imperatives. Despite this I argue that each of Kagan's factors, temperament, social class, and birth order, are mediated by or modified by parental involvement with their children.

## **6.6. *Infant's Incorporation of Parental Influences***

Rutter suggests that the mechanisms that maintain continuity are:

1. The development of self-concept formation. "Continuity might become stronger after the ages of 2-3 yr...." because cognitive processing is too limited prior to that age [Rutter, 1987, p1282; see also Kagan, 1984, p111].
2. Stress in early infancy can lead to vulnerability to stress later in life as a result of endocrine and hormonal alterations that may be permanent. [Rutter, 1987, p1282]
3. A third component, not noted by Rutter in the 1987 article, is the modifications made by the nervous system that result in structural alterations that have some continuity.

I will discuss each of these mechanisms in turn.

### **1. Self concept development**

Hugh MacKay [1997], after explaining that the most powerful influence on most young people is the example of their parents, continues that:

"..each of us uses our life experience, especially the experience of our formative years to, to spin a protective cocoon of values and beliefs. That cocoon in turn, serves as a kind of filter; we interpret situations and ideas we encounter in terms of the attitudes we have already formed."

I am arguing that the baby, and later the infant, builds up a model of the world and him/herself that he/she uses to understand and guide him/herself in the world outside the family. This model is composed of their genetic inheritance and the learning they gained from their parents and family. I have outlined this model in Chapter 5. It will then be confirmed, adjusted or even replaced in later life. Their experiences with their peers and siblings will be crucial in this remodeling [Parke & O'Neil, 2000]. Nevertheless the brain is essentially conservative. "The more frequently a certain pattern of neural activation occurs, the more indelible the internal representation." [Perry et al, 1995] It takes a fairly traumatic event in the ante-natal or neonatal period to deviate an animal from its inherited tendencies. Later in life it takes a similarly powerful influence to throw a child on to a completely different path of development from the one that he started with. While there is scope for wide variations along the broad road of development, we are not fully flexible; we cannot grow a new heart, we cannot become a horse, we can

decide to be a vegetarian but not to give up food entirely. Similarly our basic emotional and mental life is determined by the rules of the game, but just as in chess there are an almost infinite number of moves despite the rules, so do we have scope to differ from our genetic and infant-learned constraints.

The difficulty with this hypothesis for the argument that learning during the attachment phase is important, is that some authorities, including Kagan, believe that for beliefs and internal representations to have some stability the infant needs to have achieved a sense of self. They take the view that this sense of self does not become available until 2 ½ -3 years old, after the age that attachment styles are developed.

On the other hand, Fonagy [1991a], Bretherton [1991] and Stern [1998] have all argued that babies and infants do internalize representations out of which internal working models of attachment experiences are created. Bretherton [1991] proposes a course for the development of the social self that expands from birth onwards. He asserts that a rudimentary sense of familiarity with episodes involving the self-and-other may be found at 3 - 4 months while older infants appear to be able to anticipate. It, therefore, may not be necessary to await the arrival of obvious self awareness in order for internal representations to be laid down.

### **2. Infantile stress**

Traumatic stress appears to disturb the balance between catecholamines, thyroid hormones and left hemispheric functioning and cortisol, oxytocin and right hemisphere functioning according to Wang [1997]. He notes that cortisol and oxytocin are connected to species preservation behaviours such as attachment. Henry [1997] recognizes that the same response to stress occurs in both post traumatic stress disorder and infant trauma. Research done by Hennessy in 1997 showed that involuntary separation from an attachment figure activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system. In severe cases these changes appear to become persistent.

### **3. Neural structure**

Neurobiological research is starting to conclude that the infant experiences modify the brain's wiring systems. This may be considered as a biological confirmation of



the mental working model theory. Development comes from the brain's own self-organizing operations [Lerner, 1998]. This occurs in the context of a relationship with another self. These experiences shape the organization of the regulatory system in the orbital fronto-limbic right hemisphere. In optimal early environments a system emerges in the rostral brain area that can modulate under stress, a flexible coping pattern. Non-optimal psycho-biological experiences lead to a pruning of the sympathetic ventral and parasympathetic lateral tegmental limbic circuits resulting in dysfunction of the internal reparative mechanisms greatest when under stress and challenge [Schor, 1998 and 2001]. In 1989, Zeanah was prepared to venture that the neuropsychological processes were becoming recognized that appear to show that representations are arranged in hierarchical networks with higher order or more global representations overlying more specific event schemas. Perry [1995] explains:

“ In the developing brain, undifferentiated neural systems are critically dependent upon sets of environmental and micro-environmental cues (e.g. neurotransmitters, cellular adhesion molecules, neurohormones, aminoacids, ions) to appropriately organize from their undifferentiated, immature forms. Lack (or disruption) of these critical cues can result in abnormal neuronal division, migration, differentiation, synaptogenesis- all of which contribute to mal organization and compromised function in the affected systems.”

In the next chapter I will expand upon the neurology of infancy but these quotations paint a picture of massive early construction and destruction within the nervous system of babies and infants that clearly may lead to permanent changes in the way the infant develops. I have argued that early infant experience is important because:

- Internalized representations that are subsequently built upon develop early in life;
- Stress in early infancy can have long-lasting effects; and
- The child's genetic makeup interacts with their experiences to modify the brain organization. The brain's operations are affected. Mental working models are set up which are hierarchical in nature.

Siegel summarizes these ideas when he states that:

“Recent discoveries from a number of independent fields, including those of developmental psychology and cognitive neuroscience, can be synthesized into an integrated framework for understanding how the brain gives rise to mental processes and is directly shaped by interpersonal experiences.”

[2001]

In other words, parents affect their offspring's brain and mind.

### **6.7. Conclusions**

The question of the influence of early childhood on later personality and that of whether there is continuity in development or a stage development where each stage is relatively independent of the preceding ones have engaged researchers and theorists for many years and no conclusive answer is available. I am suggesting there is sufficient evidence, some of it laid out above, to assume that early childhood is important. It follows that the type of attachment the parents and child form with each other is relevant. Furthermore the assumption that there is some continuation of its effects also has validity. The next chapter will examine the evidence that attachment style influences the child's behaviour and attitudes in later life.

## CHAPTER 7. ATTACHMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

### ***7.1. Introduction***

In the last few chapters I have established that the parenting of young children is an important factor in their future development and that the attachment relationship between parent and child is a vital aspect of the parent-child relationship in the child's early life. In this chapter I further the argument to discuss the relationship between attachment style and the later development of the child.

Connecting the social phenomenon of citizenship and the psychological theory of attachment invites a novel approach to the review of the research literature. This is because the questions I want to answer are not always the central focus of the research yet this same piece of research may include findings that are relevant to my endeavour.

This chapter will consider the following issues:

- Do different styles of attachment channel the development of particular personal qualities? Specifically, does a secure attachment style relate to the development of the qualities required for an ethically responsible citizen?
- Is there stability over time in the effects of these attachment styles?

Two other relevant questions will be left to later chapters:

- Do cultures in which infants are raised affect the attachment style most prevalent in that society?
- Is attachment connected to moral development?

The present evidence cannot answer any of these questions definitively, however I argue that the evidence points towards clear trends. These trends, I contend, are sufficiently strong to allow me to proceed with the remainder of my thesis.

I will review the current evidence by considering the personal qualities that are related to secure attachment at school age, adolescence and adulthood. At each life stage it will be noted that the same qualities of self-worth and esteem, of social skills, of problem solving abilities, and of the management of stress and emotion are linked to the attachment style. These positive personal qualities have been defined in previous chapters as being valuable in citizens.

I will then consider the few studies that show evidence of the continuity over time of the attachment style. The evidence at the moment does not allow discrimination between the continuity of an internal working model created in infancy and the continuity of specific parental practices and family culture as the reason for the stability that is observed. Nevertheless there is sufficient understanding of neuroscience now to argue that early childhood experiences affect the brain in long-standing ways. A section in this chapter is devoted to this evidence which adds to the other evidence, presented in the last chapter, that early infancy is important in setting the stage for the future.

Behind attachment theory is a general theory of development that proposes an interplay of genetic and environmental influences [Ainsworth, 1977]. Infants start with a genetic inheritance that allows for a wide range of pathways along which the infant may develop depending on how their physical and social environments interact with, accentuate or diminish their genetic potentials. “As development proceeds and structures progressively differentiate, the number of pathways that remain open diminishes.” [Bowlby, 1988, pp64-65]

Our genetic make-up that has evolved over millions of years includes pre-programmed structures that are the basis for providing what is biologically essential to our healthy functioning. As social mammals we seek protection, care and security in the company of others. Attachment is the means to this end [Bowlby, 1988]. It is not surprising then that genetics and attachment are closely intertwined. This will be discussed in a later section of the chapter.

The final section will introduce the link between attachment and the formation of a self, particularly the ability to reflect on one’s own thoughts. This capacity and its connection to attachment is important in the later development of my thesis that infant attachment can be linked to our adult beliefs that make assumptions about ourselves and our world. The social phenomena of citizenship can be linked to these adult beliefs resulting in an indirect connection with infant attachment.

Two aspects of attachment theory are important for my purposes:

1. that the child develops a degree of felt-security; and
2. that the extent of the child’s ability to engage in curious and exploratory behaviour is correlated with the degree of felt-security.

It has been found that secure attachment to the mother forms in about 60% of infants [van Ijzendoorn, 1996, p43]. A child may form a different attachment mode with each parent [van Ijzendoorn, 1996, p44]. Though there may be a more sensitive period during babyhood and infancy for attachment to develop most readily, the effects are not irreversible. However, attachment style appears to have some stability over time. Michael Rutter, for instance, writes that “..a substantial body of evidence points to it remaining a key feature of relationships throughout the whole of life.” [1995]

Schaffer in his 1996 textbook *Social Development* explains that:

“The security typology has been said to predict a remarkably wide range of psychological functions, including:  
*personality characteristics*, e.g. self-esteem, self-knowledge, enthusiasm, resilience;  
*peer relationships*, e.g. sociability, friendliness, cooperativeness, empathy, popularity;  
*relationship with adults*, e.g. independence, confidence with strangers, compliance;  
*emotional aspects*, e.g. positive affect, negative affect, frustration tolerance, impulse control;  
*cognitive aspects*, e.g. maturity of play, persistence in problem solving, curiosity, attention span;  
*Adjustment*, e.g. antisocial behaviour, psychopathy.” [p147]

He continues by saying that “In every instance the hypothesis investigated by the large number of studies that have examined this problem was that securely attached children are ‘superior’ in comparison with insecure children, and in many instances this expectation was borne out.” However he goes on to say that the link is far from firmly established as there are just too many discrepancies and exceptions. “Prediction over a period of several years is always hazardous, and especially so because of the uncontrolled influence of intervening events.” [p147] This is particularly a problem for this thesis since most of the research I will use to argue my case is flawed in that the number of participants may be small, the participants may not be characteristic of the whole population, the studies may not have been replicated or the assessment tools may not have been validated. I do not disagree with Schaffer, but, given the impressive results that I will bring to the argument later in the chapter, and that in large populations local or accidental discrepancies are ironed out, the statistics will continue to favour the secure child. Of course, some children will experience difficulties and traumas later in life that affect their sense of security even though in these situations it has been shown

that early secure attachment provides a measure of resilience. [Heinzer, 1995; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998]. Before going on to consider the way infant attachment style could result in adult traits, I will review the literature regarding the effect of the infant's attachment style on toddlers, young school-aged children and adolescents.

## **7.2. School Aged Children**

The following are summaries of some of the relevant literature that describes the attributes of infants and preschool to primary school aged children in relation to their attachment style. I concentrate on the attributes of securely attached children underlining their positive attributes.

- Mother-infant problem-solving at age 2 is better in secure children. [Schieche, 1995, 1996; in Grossman, 1999; Frankel & Bates, 1990]
- “A secure attachment to mother tended to promote the understanding of negative valenced emotions [Laible & Thompson, 2000] and of mixed emotions [Steele, Steele, Croft & Fonagy, 1999] in the preschool period.” [von Salisch, 2001]
- “Higher secure attachment uniquely predicted that at 33 months, children would show less fear and anger in episodes designed to elicit fear and anger, and less distress in episodes designed to elicit joy..” in contrast to insecurely attached children. In other words their ability to regulate their emotions was better developed. (112 children tested) [Kochanska, 2001]
- The quality of mother- child relations at 15 months was related to assessments of personal and interpersonal competence at age 3½ years with the securely attached being the more competent [Waters, Wippman & Sroufe, 1979].
- In 5 year olds secure attachment is related to a positive sense of self, competence and social acceptance, behavioural adjustment to school and behavioural manifestations of self esteem (two studies of 95 and 50 kindergarten children) [Verscheeren et al, 1996].
- 6 year old securely attached children tend to give positive, flexible and realistic responses to self-evaluation questions while insecurely attached children tend to give either negative self- evaluations or do not acknowledge their faults [Heyman & Duck, 1997].

- When observed in peer and school settings children who seemed secure with their mothers as infants exhibited greater ego resilience as well as social and exploratory competence than insecure ones. Security with fathers also contributes to favourable outcomes [Main,1996].
- “Children with secure attachment representations had a significantly more positive view of the self in the relationship with the attachment figure than children with disorganized attachment representations, and significantly more positive perception of the way others view them than children with avoidant attachment representations.” [McCarthy,1998]
- 6 year olds who were securely attached at 12 months of age are more likely to make spontaneous self-reflective remarks, indulge in self-talk in toddlerhood, understand minds cannot be read, and monitor their thinking and memory [Fonagy et al, 1991].
- The development of competence and self-regulation have their foundation in early attachment relationships. “Converging evidence suggests these same powerful adaptive systems protect development in favourable and unfavourable environments.” [Masten & Coatsworth, 1998]
- “The quality of attachment at 12-28 months of age was a strong predictor of behaviour at age 4.5-5 years.” Insecurely attached children were more likely to have behaviour problems in preschool (96 children) [Erickson, Sroufe & Egeland, 1985].
- Using an assessment of the current attachment style, that is, it was not a longitudinal study, it was found that a sense of secure attachment to mother predicted that the child would have a positive sense of self, while a similar sense of security to the father predicted more assertive and less withdrawn/anxious behaviour in the child (50 children) [Verschuere & Marcoen,1999].
- A study of 52 six year old children showed that their current attachment to their mother was correlated to their level of self-esteem. Securely attached children had a more positive sense of self, could tolerate imperfections in themselves and tolerate stress better, while insecure children used a variety of defensive measures to avoid reality. [Cassidy,1988]

- The quality of the parent-child attachment in late childhood and early adolescence (541 participants) generalizes primarily to the quality of the children's close peer relations, rather than relationships based on popularity or acquaintance only. In particular parental availability and present secure attachment correlated with positive friendships and low levels of conflict in peer relations. [Lieberman et al, 1999]
- "The children of parents who are responsive and attuned and see their infants as separate are likely to be better adjusted socially, more able to reflect on their feelings, and to weave their experience into a coherent narrative. The capacity to handle loss and separation with appropriate anger, sadness and reconciliation is associated with secure attachment." [Lieberman & Pawl, 1990, p375]

These studies are varied in the ages of the children studied; in whether they used longitudinal or current assessments of attachment; and in the psychological instruments used. All the studies examined white, middle class children. Nevertheless the results are impressive in the similarity of their findings. Taken together they strongly imply that secure attachment is advantageous. Thus, children starting school who are securely attached are more ready and able to avail themselves of the opportunities schools and peers provide to develop further emotionally, cognitively and socially. In summary, Rutter [1995] agrees when he states that:

"The specific claims of attachment theory concern the child's developing sense of inner confidence, efficacy and self worth, aspects of intimate personal relationships including the capacity to be emotionally close to seek and receive care and to give care to others."

### **7.3. The Neuro-psychological Base**

A recent advance in the grounding of attachment theory is the work done by developmental neuroscientists demonstrating that early life experiences affect the architecture of the growing brain.

I have referred to the research in neuroscience in earlier chapters. This section adds to the previous discussion to highlight its importance in the stability of attachment behaviour over time.

The government of Ontario, Canada funded a study of Early Childhood. *The Early Years Study* made its final report in April 1999. It was co-chaired by Margaret N



McCain and J Fraser Mustard with a large reference group and sought input from a broad section of people within the local community as well as from Canada, USA and Europe. They reviewed “..new evidence from many disciplines- including sociology, neuroscience, pediatrics, epidemiology and developmental psychology...[regarding] ... the crucial nature of development, particularly brain development, in the early years and its effect on learning, behaviour and health in the later stages of the life cycle.” [p31]

The key points made are as follows:

1. “Early brain development is interactive, rapid and dramatic.
2. During critical periods, particular parts of the brain need positive stimulation to develop properly.
3. The quality of early sensory stimulation influences the brain’s ability to think and regulate bodily functions.” [p32]

The study quoted Schore as noting that:

“..early experience has a **decisive impact** on the architecture of the brain and on the nature and extent of adult capacities. Early **interactions** don’t just create the context, they **directly affect** the way the brain is ‘wired’. Brain activity is **non-linear**: there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills.” [Schoe, 1997]

The Canadian team adapted from Doherty [1997] information about the critical periods for some aspects of brain development and function. Three of these periods are relevant to my argument:

- The critical period for developing emotional control is 9ms to 2yrs waning to 5yrs.
  - The critical period for developing habitual ways of responding is 6ms to 2yrs waning to 5yrs.
  - The critical period for developing peer social skills is 3yrs to 6yrs waning to 7yrs.
- [p37]

They also quoted a study by Gunnar [1998] regarding the relationship between attachment security and the reaction to stress in toddlers. She found that infants securely attached to their parents tended to develop into “socially competent preschoolers” and had “the lowest levels of cortisol (a stress related hormone) in the classroom.” [p39]

Others have reported that the “..mind develops at the interface between human relationships and the unfolding structure and function of the brain..” [SiegaL, 2001]

while Schore [2001], whom I have quoted above, details the neurobiology of secure attachment in a recent article. He notes the effects of secure attachment on the development of the right brain, affect regulation and infant mental health claiming that the resultant “..efficient right brain function is a resilience factor for optimal development over the later stages of the life cycle.” The non-verbal right hemisphere is dominant during the first three years of life and thereafter “..plays a special role in processing the physiological and cognitive components of social-emotional information.” Schore’s findings touched on in previous chapters, describe the pruning of some neural networks in new borns under stress [1998].

Panksepp [2001], another neuroscientist, has a more cautious view of the current research, nevertheless he claims that “..the CRF (opiate and oxytocin) circuitry appear to be at the very heart of the separation-distress system of mammalian brain.” He states that “We can be confident that early attachment experiences do guide the emergence of future social skills and one’s subjective sense of life quality.”

Ledoux [1998] claims that the brain has “The ability to rapidly form memories of stimuli associated with danger, to hold onto them for long periods (perhaps eternally), and to use them automatically when similar situations occur in the future..”. He notes that an emotional situation creates both an explicit and an implicit memory, the latter being at an unconscious level. Distressing events, then, can have long-standing effects.

These studies provide confirmation that there are biological alterations, some having an enduring nature, that underpin the results of the psychological research on attachment styles in young children outlined in the previous section. Furthermore there is some evidence that there are critical periods, albeit broad ones, during which the most favourable development occurs.

#### **7.4. Adolescence and Young Adults**

Starting school is an important transition in a child’s development. Adolescence is a similarly important milestone. Attachment in infancy and childhood is usually assessed using the Strange Situation Assessment interview, a modification of it or a semi-projective measure that involves puppets, stories or pictures depicting separation and provoking anxiety [Ainsworth, 1978; Kobak, 1993]. Measures to assess attachment in adults have also been created. Adolescents, coming between these two life stages, have

their attachment styles investigated using either the adult measures or modifications of them. The attachment research in this area is extensive. The following is an overview of many recent papers, the first ones are cross-sectional studies that use questionnaires to assess the style of attachment at the time of the research.

- The secure adolescent was rated as more ego-resilient, less anxious and less hostile by peers and reported little distress and high levels of social support in an investigation of 53 college students in 1988. Connectedness is enormously protective for physical and emotional health, especially for adolescents, according to the findings of a longitudinal study on adolescent health [Resnick et al, 1997]. The findings of the 1988 study were interpreted to support the “..notion of working models as an organizational construct associated with differing styles of affect regulation in distress-related contexts.” [Kobak & Sceery, 1988]. This hypothesis, when linked to other research findings that affect regulation is connected to attachment style [Kochanska, 2001], allows me to agree with Bowlby [1967] that there is a relationship between attachment style and working models.
- Self esteem is positively related to independence, encouragement/acceptance and secure attachment to both parents in adolescents. In this study by McCormack and Kennedy in 1994, 218 college students were assessed using two assessments of attachment and another assessment to measure self-esteem. The authors suggest that “..the child who functions well emotionally and socially at one age will be more likely to function well at the next.” [p54]
- Secure adolescents develop adaptive ways of coping with negative emotions and attain a sense of self-efficacy. This research by Lynne Cooper et al [1998] involved over 2000 adolescents, but almost a quarter were excluded because they gave inconsistent results across the two attachment assessments administered. Of the remainder, 56% were classified as secure. The secure adolescents had fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety; reported significantly more positive self-concepts; and generally reported superior functioning across multiple developmentally relevant domains. In the secure adolescents the effects did not vary across gender, race or early, mid- and late adolescence. The research suggests that adolescents have different or differently timed developmental trajectories for

each attachment style, the secure attached adolescents following the more normative pattern in which symptom levels rise in mid-adolescence to fall by late adolescence.

- A recent paper by Simons, Paternite and Shore [2001] investigated 68 adolescents with an average age of 13yrs 3ms. It used a questionnaire (IPPA) that provides an index of the quality of parent/ child attachment to both parents separately. Secure attachment, they say, is “..characterized by open communication and the expression, understanding and acceptance of feelings.” The authors found that “..adolescents’ perceived quality of the current mother/adolescent attachment relationship was predictive of adolescent views of self and others and that, in turn, behavioural dispositions towards others.” They note their findings “..are consistent with other research evidence that has indicated higher self-esteem and peer competence for securely attached adolescents..” and that it is “..consistent with the contention that secure attachment facilitates positive working models of self and others.”
- An autonomous (i.e., secure) attachment representation was associated with reported positive concurrent relationships with parents; and active socially oriented, non avoiding coping styles. Autonomous adolescents also received higher scores on ego-resiliency and presented a more positive self-concept. (44 participants) [Zimmermann and Grossmann,1997]
- These and similar studies confirm that a secure attachment, whether in infancy, primary school age or in adolescence, has definite advantages for the individual and, as a result, for the society in which the individual resides. The continuity for the style of attachment is not assessed in these reports.

### **7.5. Continuity of Attachment Styles**

An increasing number of longitudinal studies are being reported that provide evidence for there being a high level of continuity between attachment style as observed in infancy and the style found in later adolescence and adulthood.

Mary Main and her associates [1994] developed an adult attachment assessment [AAI] which can also be used with older adolescents. This assessment identifies three styles with similarities to the infant ones. They are:

- limited in which the individual is emotionally detached, coolly dismissive of attachment feelings and needs, collaborates poorly and explores their inner mental state unpredictably in therapeutic situations;
- the preoccupied individual tends to have intense emotional involvement in their family of origin as their early conflicts have not been resolved, they are often ambivalent, hostile, compliant, dependent, seductive and controlling despite a high level of collaboration in a therapeutic endeavour; and
- the balanced style which is similar to the secure style in infants.

Using this adult attachment interview [AAI]

“..an interviewer asks the ( in this case) mother for a description of her early relationships and attachment-related events and for her sense of the way these relationships and events affected her personality. In considering the results, as much or more attention is paid to the way a mother tells her story and deals with probing questions about it as to the historical material she describes...a mother of a secure infant is likely to report having a reasonably happy childhood and to show herself able to talk about it readily and in detail, giving due place to such unhappy events as may have occurred as well as to the happy ones.” [Bowlby, 1980, p133]

Even if they had an unhappy rejected childhood, “Each is able to tell her story in a fluent and coherent way ...even through tears, etc... and appear to have been integrated with all the negative ones.” [p134] Such a mother is likely to have a securely attached child.

Adults and adolescents can be assessed using the Adult Attachment Interview or by relationship questionnaires [Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991] although there are differences between these assessments in the classifications that are found. Using one of these methods adult attachment styles are described as secure, pre-occupied, dismissing or fearful [Bartholomew & Howowitz, 1991]. The arguments in favour of adult attachment being a continuation of and development of the childhood attachment bond include:

- The similarity of the feeling associated with arousal;
- The ability to command attention under conditions of threat;
- The grief and protest that occurs with loss; and
- The temporal linkage- adult attachments develop as parental ones fade. [Weiss, 1996]

Nevertheless, the suggestion that adult security is a continuation of that developed in infancy remains contentious until there is evidence from longitudinal research.

A number of longitudinal studies have now been reported which purport to show evidence of continuity of attachment style from infancy to young adulthood.

Two of the earliest reports are:

1. 77% of adolescents who were seen with their mothers in the infant Strange Situation Assessments exhibited corresponding mental states using the AAI [Hamilton, 1995].
2. 78% of young adults' attachment styles were predictable from infancy after individuals suffering negative life events were excluded from the sample (a 70% match for the whole sample) [Waters et al, 1995]. Main, who commented on these findings, points out that there is sufficient unpredictability to refute any claim to early determinism [Main, 1996]. As Lewis et al [1989, p250] note, early attachment security does not guarantee later invulnerability, nor does an insecure attachment mean the child is doomed.

One publication reported no evidence of continuity between infant and adult attachment with many of the subjects of the research transitioning to insecurity. The subjects (numbering 57) of the study were chosen because of "...their high risk of poor developmental outcomes." The authors note "The evidence indicated that there might be lawful discontinuity. ...The continuous and discontinuous groups were differentiated on the basis of child maltreatment, maternal depression, and family functioning in early adolescence." [Weinfield, Sroufe & Egeland, 2000] This indicates that distressing and traumatic events, especially ones that are of long-standing duration can cause a negative change in attachment style but it does not deny the possibility of stability of attachment in normal circumstances that the previous reports strongly suggest.

There is no evidence from these reports that differentiates between the possibility that it is the continuing family atmosphere rather than infant attachment per se that facilitates the stability. Longitudinal studies seldom examine the stability and nature of children's social environments over time. [Elder, 1998] But taken together with the neuroscientific research presented earlier the assumption that infant attachment is important by itself begins to look credible. Cassidy [1988] agrees, pointing out that "Although some of the

pressure for continuity comes from the environment, the working models organize and help mould that environment; and by seeking particular kinds of people and by eliciting particular behaviour from them, the individual participates in the creation of his or her own environment.”

I will leave the formation of working models until later. The next section will consider the links between adult secure attachment and the personal qualities of that individual.

### **7.6. Adult Attachment**

Using The AAI or one of the questionnaire adult assessment methods adult attachment style can be related to:

- Secure persons have more constructive ways of coping, seek more social support and feel less distressed than insecure persons [Main, 1996]. I should note here that ‘secure’ and ‘insecure’ is often used when referring to an adult person with a secure (balanced) attachment style as rated on the AAI.
- Secure and anxious/ ambivalent persons described themselves as more curious and held more positive attitudes towards curiosity than did avoidant persons. Time competition between information search and social interaction increased information search in avoidant persons but decreased it among anxious/ambivalent persons. Secure persons reported less preference for cognitive closure and were more likely to rely on new information in making social judgements [Mikulincer, 1997]. This report suggests that secure individuals tend to be more curious, more creative and more flexible in their thinking. They are more open to learn from experience.
- Avoidant persons underestimated self-other similarity; anxious/ambivalent persons overestimated it; while secure persons provided a more accurate similarity score. Insecure persons’ distortions resulted from transformations they made in the representations of others [Mikulincer, Orbach & Iavnieli, 1998]. In other words secure individuals are less likely to distort reality.
- Persons with secure attachment style describe their family of origin and their current family more positively and scored higher on variables indicative of self-confidence, psychological well-being and functioning in the social world [Diehl, Elnick, Bourbeau & Labouvie-Vief, 1998].

- “The findings for personality traits show that all of the personality measures examined here were related to secure and insecure attachment rating. Secure attachment was related to higher self-esteem, internal locus of control, extroversion and openness to experience.” claims Mickelson et al [1997]. They go on to say that “..attachment patterns appear to be central organizing factors in personality and social development.”
- Secure attachment style was associated with higher scores on personality dimensions such as sociability, dominance, social presence, self-acceptance, empathy, communality and the capacity for status; and lower scores on the immature defense style [Diehl et al,1998].
- Brennan and Shaver [1998] note that “..the two personality factors related to parental treatment were most closely related to attachment insecurity.” They continue by suggesting that “..the quality of one’s early attachment to caregivers account for some of the variance in abnormal or mal adaptive personality functioning..” and “..Secure individuals trust their attachment figures and perceive little environmental threat; as a result, confident of their attachment figure’s reliability, secures can defend themselves against environmental threats, and hence are able to process emotions in a fluid and non-defensive manner and remain the least troubled by personality disorders.”
- Using the AAI, a coherent, collaborative response (i.e. secure) is found in a majority of adults in low risk samples but rare in clinically distressed populations, among psychiatrically distressed criminals, among individuals who abuse others, among German right-wing activist youths and mothers of most clinically distressed children [Main, 1996].

The personal qualities linked to secure adult attachment in these studies show a similarity to the qualities linked to secure attachment in childhood and adolescents discussed earlier. The same qualities are evident in securely attached individuals at all three life stages. Harris [1993] provides a useful table documenting the consistency and continuity of secure and insecure attachment using different test instruments from the pregnant mother through babyhood to 10 year olds. Leaving aside, for the moment, the stability of these qualities from infancy through to adulthood, this link permits the equation that in a society where there are many securely attached individuals of any age



there should also be a similar proportion of people with the personal qualities already identified. These qualities of self-worth, of emotional regulation, of well adapted cognitive and social functioning, of the ability to manage stress and seek emotional support and of the ability to relate well in close relationships, are the attributes that are considered valuable in citizens.

The personal attributes linked to attachment form a consistent story. If personal qualities such as self-esteem and social skills are stable over time this could add evidence to the stability of security over time too. A confounding factor in this issue of continuity, however, is the possibility that both personal attributes and attachment style are linked through another more basic element. Some well recognized authorities consider this element to be genetically inherited temperament. There is an ongoing debate as to whether or not attachment and temperament are independent factors. The next section will consider this issue.

### ***7.7. Attachment and Genetics***

Temperamental differences can be noted between newborn infants. It is usually assumed that these differences are the result of genetic traits [Kagan, 1984, p64-67]. In this section I will argue that infant temperament while having a genetic component, is the result of the interaction between this factor and the context in which it is embedded. The attachment relationship is, of course, an important aspect of that context for the infant.

It is probably not possible to obtain a definitive answer to this question regarding the possible relationship between attachment and temperament despite the controversy. Both sides to the debate can find in theirs and others' research evidence to support their point of view. Proving that the actual temperament of the baby is more important than the way the parents perceive the baby's temperament is a tall order. It is quite possible for a parent to have such a distorted concept of their baby that they believe one with an initially easy going nature to be difficult and act towards him accordingly while another parent may manage to fit in to the chaotic rhythms of a difficult baby so well that the difficulties dissipate. Perhaps it is the fit between the parent and baby that determines the immediate interactions between them and the ability or inability of both to find an acceptable, mutually beneficial relationship that determines the longer term outcome [Winnicott, 1971; see also "The Parents' Part", section 5.5]. The attachment style may or may not be affected by the baby's initial temperament. Even a slight difference in the

parent's reactions may, over time, multiply into extensive differences in the developing child. As an analogy, the mirror on Hubble telescope was only one fiftieth of a hair's breadth out of true yet the telescope was unable to focus. The subtle factors affecting human behaviour are so numerous and intertwined that to prove one is more influential than another acting at the same time is beyond our present abilities as social scientists. Despite these difficulties, there is research evidence in favour of a reciprocal interaction between attachment and temperament. These arguments have been set out in Chapter 5 and in section 7.2.

A series of papers in 1995 is illustrative. Fox [1995] suggested that the association between the AAI of the parent and the infant's attachment as observed in the Strange Situation procedure is the result of temperamental characteristics of children by determining the parent's perception of their early experiences with their child, rather than the sensitivity of the parent to the child's needs. In a rejoinder van Ijzendoorn described research that refuted these claims. While he acknowledged that "...temperamental characteristics of children have been assumed to explain at least part of the variation in their attachment behaviour.." he cites several studies that have failed to show a definite link between them. He goes on to cite his own meta-analysis and other research that supports his view that parental sensitivity influences the quality of the infant-parent attachment relationship [1995a]. As noted in Chapter 5, Prior et al concedes that temperament may also be influenced by the style of parenting [2000 p53]. Temperament is not a solely of genetic origin.

Summarizing the literature in 1995 Rutter wrote that "The evidence on the connections between temperament and attachment security are limited but it now seems apparent that a temperamental dimension reflecting negative emotionality is associated with insecure attachment, although it is only one of many factors that influence children's responses to separation and reunion." [Rutter, 1995]

Another way to consider the effects of genetic inheritance is to test the contribution of family environmental factors and genetic factors to personality differences in adults. An early twin study by Bouchard and McGue [1990] revealed that "...the child rearing environment measures generally explain very little variance in adult personality." Subsequent behavioural genetic research found that "...genetic factors contribute substantially to correlation between parenting and children's outcome." [Plomin, 1999]

One such study reported that “..genetic factors contribute importantly to the longitudinal associations between parenting and adolescent adjustment assessed 3 years later, especially for antisocial behaviour.” [Neiderhiser et al, 1999] My interpretation of this paper is that genetic factors within the child, the parent, or both can all influence their relationship resulting in positive or negative outcomes. It does not seem surprising that each individual personality and temperament will affect the parent-child relationship, so it comes as counter intuitive when other papers report the lack of a link between attachment and infant temperament. Yet, for example, in a study of 98 Israeli infants the researchers concluded that “The result adds to the accumulation of findings showing that infant temperament may not be an important antecedent of attachment insecurity.” [Anat & Ofra, 2000] This investigation assessed the infant temperament using the mother’s perceptions of her infant. Perhaps perceptions are more important in the mother’s reactions to her child than objective assessments of temperament made by experts.

Anat cited a large scale study by the National Institute of Child health and Development which found no direct association between perceived temperament and insecurity. It is noteworthy that some research has shown that there is little co-relation between mothers’ reports of their infant’s temperament and the behaviour observed by researchers themselves [Seifer, 1994]. The workers reported that social class, race, maternal anxiety and depression had been implicated in mothers’ biases and added that parents’ inexperience with a wide range of infants might also account for some of their understanding.

Kagan is another authority who is less impressed by the results of attachment research. I have referred to his work in previous chapters and summarize it again in this context. He claims that temperament is a major factor in the trajectory that children follow. To make this claim he cites his own research that showed highly reactive, inhibited infants tended to become fearful when older while low reactive, uninhibited infants became bold and sociable and tended towards conduct disorders [2000]. Kagan has been criticized because a critical reflection “..must represent the current state of affairs accurately; present convincing new data or a fresh, internally coherent logical argument; and avoid repeating the same conceptual errors it seeks to criticize. It is suggested that Kagan’s critique fares poorly on all 3 counts.” [Shpancer-Noam,1997]

According to Zucherman [1995] “What is inherited are chemical templates that produce and regulate patterns involved in building the structure of the nervous system and the neuro transmitters, enzymes and hormones that regulate them.” I have already pointed out that environment importantly influences the nervous system especially in the early months of life. This adds to the probability that temperament may not be wholly genetically determined.

Clearly the debate continues. All that can be accepted at present is that many factors impinge on the parent-infant relationship and together they result in a particular attachment style which itself affects the structure of the infant brain and so, to a larger or smaller extent, depending on the later experiences of the growing child, influences the future for that child. Thompson summarizes the position, pointing out that both developmental history and current circumstances are influential and that their “..relative influence can vary for different children.” [2000]

### **7.8. *The Emerging Self***

This section considers the question about how infant attachment style influences the future development of the self.

The parents’ behaviour, both responsive and demanding, over time is perceived by the infant with some degree of accuracy. The infant uses these perceptions along with his own internal processes to form long-lasting neural changes [see section 7.4]. Bowlby, in his early work that laid the basis of attachment theory, introduced a cognitive theory of change. This stated that during childhood representational models are built up and the causes of problems are interpreted in the light of these representational models. When new information is found to be incompatible with the representational model this new information may be denied by exclusion, but if this new information continues to be perceived a new model will be constructed very reluctantly and when it is consolidated there may be oscillation between the two until finally one may dominate [1980, p230-231]. Thompson [1998] notes that “The working model of the self is rooted in a construction process of shared dialogue in which important lessons, not only about the self, but also about emotion, relationships and morality are provided.” The dialogue between the parent and child is clearly a most important one.

Attachment theory assumes that we are genetically programmed to develop goal-directed behavioural systems, that is, a survival process aimed at maintaining proximity to a parental figure [Main, 1996]. The behaviour elicited by such systems may not always be under conscious control. In this view of the organization of psychological processes, the internal representations of one's world and of oneself are multiple and built up over time [see for example Youniss, 1989, pp300-302]. These possibilities have been researched in children using projective and narrative techniques. For example McCarthy [1998] found that in children around 5 years old the secure ones had a significantly more positive view of the self in relationship with the attachment figure than children exhibiting disorganized attachment and a significantly more positive perception of the way others view them than children with avoidant attachment representations.

Bretherton in a 1991 paper explores the history of the concept of the social self noting that attachment theory follows “..in the footsteps of classical social psychologists and object relation theories.” She then goes on to broaden attachment concepts by linking them with more recent (up to 1991) research based on the theories of representation and of social cognition. Her summary includes:

“Extrapolating from attachment theory and research, it appears that the development of a coherent, well-organized *Me* (as described in the social cognition literature) must always be understood in terms of a coherent, integrated, well functioning executive system. If an infant feels secure in attachment relationships, the *I* and *Me* will function well in relation to one another, but if the infant feels insecure the optimal integration of *I* and *Me* will be disturbed, a disturbance that will be difficult, if not impossible to correct later.”

Bretherton understands the self to emerge over time under the influence of relationships with significant others. She cites several research studies that appear to support her argument.

Fonagy [1999] has done extensive investigation into the development of self. He theorizes on the relationship between intentionality and attachment. In one of his papers he states:

“Mary Main and Inge Bretherton independently drew attention to what the philosopher Dennett called the ‘intentional stance’. Dennett (1987) stressed that human beings try to understand each other in terms of mental states:

thoughts and feelings, beliefs and desires, in order to make sense of and, even more important, to anticipate each others' actions. If the child is able to attribute an unresponsive mother's apparently rejecting behaviour to her sadness about a loss, rather than simply feeling helpless in the face of it, the child is protected from confusion and a negative view of himself. The hallmark of the intentional stance is the child's recognition at around 3-4 years that behaviour may be based on a mistaken belief. Developmentalists have designed numerous tests of the quality of understanding false beliefs and tend to refer to this capacity as 'a theory of mind'. We prefer the term mentalisation or reflective function which denotes the understanding of one's own as well as others' behaviour in mental state terms."

Fonagy [1999] explains that children under 3 years old do not have the capacity for recognizing false beliefs. "During the second year children already talk about states of self and other, and in the third year talk about beliefs also emerges (Bartsch & Wellman, 1995). A full-fledged mentalizing ability as indicated by the capacity to attribute false beliefs in theory of mind tasks is achieved towards the end of the third year (Perner, 1991)." He cites his own research to show that security of attachment is important in the development of this ability. "In our longitudinal study of 92 children, the proportion of secure children was twice as high in the group which passed a false belief task, compared to the group which failed." [1999] Others suggest that false belief understanding may not be present until age 4 - 5 [Wellman et al, 2001] however this does not materially affect Fonagy's argument. Furthermore, Fonagy states that "Secure attachment [in its turn] provides the psychosocial basis for acquiring an understanding of mind. The secure infant feels safe in making attributions of mental states to account for the behavior of the caregiver." In other words, these infants can accept the other as having rational reactions. "By contrast the avoidant child to some degree shuns the mental state of the other, while the resistant child focuses on his own state of distress to the exclusion of close intersubjective exchanges." [1999]

A 2 year old child can pretend [Salisch, 1999]. However at that stage the pretend mode (inner reality) is not integrated with external reality. Fonagy explains that:

"Normally, the child then integrates these alternative modes to arrive at mentalization, or reflective mode, in which mental states can be experienced as representations. Inner and outer reality can then be seen as linked, yet they are accepted as differing in important ways, and no longer have to be either equated or dissociated from each other (e.g. Gopnik, 1993). Mentalization comes about through the child's experience of his mental states being reflected on, for instance through secure play with a parent or

older child. In playfulness, the caregiver gives the child's ideas and feelings (when he is "only pretending") a link with reality, by indicating the existence of an alternative perspective, which exists outside the child's mind. The parent or older child also shows that reality may be distorted by acting upon it in playful ways, and through this playfulness a pretend but real mental experience may be introduced." [1999, Fonagy's original references]

He said, summarizing his work:

"The securely attached child perceives in the caretaker's reflective stance an image of himself as desiring and believing. He sees that the caregiver represents him as an intentional being and this representation is internalized to form the self....At the core of ourselves is the representation of how we were seen....we think of others in terms of desires and beliefs because, and to the extent that, we were thought of as intentional beings." [1999]

Fonagy points out that insecure parent-child relationships lay the ground work for later distortions of personality development. Attachment between mother and child organizes the child's emerging personality by:

- Creating expectations, so that in the future the child is able to choose new partners consistent with the past;
- Broadening the internal representations of self and others, aspects that function as interpretive filters; and
- Influencing the child's successes in subsequent developmental challenges. [Sroufe, 1996]

We try to maintain a coherent sense of self, a facility that is considered to be grounded in human biology [West, 1997]. Thus the self is both a set of beliefs about our attributes and a story or narrative that we create to join these beliefs together in a meaningful way. The attachment relationship provides the ground for understanding the self and the parent other. For example, a securely attached child may come to experience himself as loveable and his parent as reliable and trustworthy, while an insecurely attached child may begin to feel unworthy of love and the parent other as unreliable or rejecting. [Harris, 1993]

Attachment therefore, influences the form of self that is created as well as the beliefs that the self takes on board.

### **7.9. The Reflective Self**

As discussed in the previous section knowledge about oneself and about others is constructed from information provided through relationships [Main, 1996]. In this section the capacity of the self to introspect will be considered. Fonagy has dealt with this subject and has done extensive investigation into the development of self and of the child's reflective capacity. He points out that the experience of security is primarily a regulator of emotional experience.

"Early experiences of flexible access to feelings are regarded as formative by attachment theorists. The autonomous sense of self emerges fully from secure parent-infant relationships (Emde & Buchsbaum, 1990; Fonagy et al, 1995a; Lieberman & Pawl, 1990)." He continues:

"Most importantly the increased control of the secure child permits him to move toward the ownership of inner experience, and toward understanding self and others as intentional beings whose behaviour is organised by mental states, thoughts, feelings, beliefs and desires (Fonagy et al., 1995a; Sroufe, 1990). Consistent with this, prospective longitudinal research has demonstrated that children with a history of secure attachment are independently rated as more resilient, self-reliant, socially oriented (Sroufe, 1983; Waters, Wippman, & Sroufe, 1979), empathic to distress (Kestenbaum, Farber, & Sroufe, 1989), (and) with deeper relationships (Sroufe, 1983)." [1999]

Grossman [Grossman, Grossman & Zimmermann] argue that attachment is used by the child as a secure base for exploration of which mental exploration is an extension [1999, p761]. They contend that "Secure attachment provides the best-known psychological precondition for tension-free, playful exploration. Thus, when their adaptation is challenged, secure children can flexibly explore possible solutions or perspectives while retaining a secure feeling during exploration." [p781] They seem to agree with Fonagy that reflection on one's internal understandings is more likely to lead to integration of the inner and outer worlds if the individual is securely attached.

Main [1991] and West [1997] have also contributed to this concept of self-reflection. West agrees with Fonagy and Bowlby in considering that the reflective capacity is "biologically anchored" but that "...attachment experiences become a modifying determinant of reflective self-function which either enhance or inhibit its developing complexity." [1997] Main writes about "metacognition" that is, thinking about thought,



which in secure individuals allows for the monitoring of thinking, memory and action into a coherent whole.

The developing child who is in a position to reflect on their own self concepts is in a position to refine or change them. In this way prejudices, unrealistic expectations and inappropriate affect can be altered or ameliorated. Furthermore self-reflection is helpful in creating a consistent narrative about oneself. Thus self-reflection is an important aspect of a mature adult, and I would venture, a mature citizen. The above authors consider that this aspect of the developing self is linked to the attachment style the child has created.

The last two sections have considered some of the ways adult personality is affected by infant attachment. This subject will be taken up again in the next chapter.

### **7.10. Summary**

There seems to be adequate evidence to support the view that most of the concepts Bowlby originally proposed are valid. These propositions, as I have indicated, are that children's experiences of interpersonal relationships are crucial to their development; that the attachment process is an intrinsic feature of human development and that a mental mechanism is a means of carrying forward into adulthood the effects of this early attachment experience [Bowlby, 1969; Rutter, 1996]. I conclude that the answer to the first question posed at the beginning of the chapter is that different styles of attachment do channel the development of particular personal qualities.

In this chapter I have provided a review of research to support the view that attachment style affects, the self-esteem, the sociability and the considerateness of both adolescents and adults. Secure adults are likely to possess the following characteristics:

- Autonomous with high self-esteem, self-confidence and self-acceptance.
- Trustful, sociable and the readiness to seek social support in times of need.
- A functional processing of emotions and self-control.
- Empathy.
- Less distortion of reality due to the ability to reflect, self-reflect, be open to experience with curiosity and flexibility.
- Act creatively.

Secure attachment can be said to relate to the development of some of the qualities that I have linked in earlier chapters to those important in ethically responsible citizenship. The parallels between the personal qualities channelled by secure attachment and the qualities of 'good' citizens will be more fully explored in Chapter 10.

I have examined the part played by genetic inheritance as expressed through temperament and suggested that this does not negate the influence of attachment. I have looked into neuroscience to show that the early environment including the attachment relationship markedly affects the way the brain and mind develop. Finally I have pointed to work done on the developing self to indicate that it too is affected by the attachment style of the child. Both these effects, occurring in early childhood, point to the likelihood that there is some stability over time in the effects of secure attachment. Some of the empirical research reviewed in this chapter point in the same direction.

Nevertheless it is also obvious that parenting a child involves more than providing an attachment figure. Parents not only react to their child's behaviour, they have dreams, hopes, and expectations for their child. Realistic or otherwise, these thoughts, some barely conscious, become behavioural demands that they make on their child. The way these demands are expressed and the way the parent responds to the child's compliance or disobedience provides the child with more information. Parents who feel secure, confident in their own abilities and sensitive to the child's emotional state and developmental level will be more likely to provide situations where a child will learn to fit in, cope with their demands and internalize appropriate guidelines for their behaviour. Insecure children, on the other hand, may have difficulty in these areas, especially if their parents function from dismissive, fearful or preoccupied attachment styles. Thus it would appear that parental attachment style is important not only for the initial attachment style of their emerging child but also for that child's ability to internalize socially acceptable behaviour.

In summary, there is evidence that a continual influence of the infant attachment style exists throughout one's life span. A case has been made out for a relationship between childhood attachment styles and adult functioning and that the mediator is likely to be some imprinting on the neural network.

This chapter's evidence is used to support the propositions laid out in Chapter 2, and presents as follows:

- The attachment style created in infancy may be modified and the repertoire of behaviours the individual can utilize can be expanded as the child matures, although the outcome in a particular case cannot be predicted, tendencies can be observed that show a moderate degree of stability from infancy onwards of the style people use in their relationships.
- The secure or balanced style of attachment seems to be the most resilient.
- People who feel they have a safe, secure base both within themselves and within their social network are freer to investigate their world, consider the needs of others as well as themselves and develop creative solutions to the physical and social problems they encounter.
- Securely attached individuals are more likely to take into consideration the welfare of others and the whole picture.

## CHAPTER 8. MORAL DEVELOPMENT

### ***8.1. Introduction***

In this chapter I will explore the connections between attachment theory and moral development. As I have previously indicated, certain moral attitudes and ethical behaviours are an important aspect of a ‘good’ citizen [see section 4.3]. One feature of ‘good’ citizens is that their social choices are made on moral grounds. This chapter will argue that the probability of an individual being endowed with the moral attitude and ethical behaviour of a ‘good’ citizen is increased when that individual experienced a secure attachment in infancy and was reared by parents who utilized an authoritative mode of child rearing. This mode will be explained in more detail later in the chapter. It is, therefore, necessary to inquire into the origins of these moral values by considering how children learn them, begin to uphold them as their own and decide whether to act on them. I will argue that:

- The attachment relationship between parent and infant provides the template from which different lines of development begin.
- As the infant grows into a child, the child incorporates the family’s values to a greater or lesser extent. This also depends on the security of their relationship with their parents.
- The family’s values are arrived at through a continuing dialogue with those of the surrounding community and society. These values can be congruent with or at variance with the values that the majority of society hold.
- The child, then, may enter society to find differing views and values from those of his/her family. How the child resolves this dilemma will, to some extent, depend on his/her attachment style which provides him/her with a belief about him/herself in relation to others.

The third and fourth points will be discussed more fully in following chapters, however in this chapter I concentrate on the first two.

The argument will entail a review of the literature to show that secure attachment is a strong foundation on which to build a moral attitude to citizenship. Moral behaviour is contingent on multiple factors. The first part of the chapter describes these factors and their place in the sequence of developing a moral attitude. This will set the stage for

arguing that the attachment style of the infant is fundamental to a number of these factors.

The chapter begins with definitions of morality, going on to describe the various theories of moral development. It continues with an inquiry into the place of genetic inheritance in the development of pro social behaviour. I will then explain how the early child-parent relationship begins the process of moral development. Leading on from that, the importance of the creation of a reflective self and of a particular concept of the other will be discussed. Finally, the influence of the family and community on the growing child is considered.

### **8.2. Morality**

Morality has been defined as a cognitive logic for the coordination of viewpoints of subjects with conflicting interests [Jensen, 1997]. This view has been criticized in cross-cultural studies particularly in the area of moral reasoning, that is the explanations of why a particular behaviour is considered right or wrong. Cognition or thinking, is only part of the story. Emotions are important too. Fear, shame, guilt and pleasure are some of the feelings we can recognize as we consider our state when moral issues are at stake. I will discuss this issue further by reviewing the various theories of moral development.

Moral development is a complex, heterogeneous, reciprocal progress involving genetic inheritance, neuro-biological maturation, accumulated experience and the interplay of the impact of the socio-cultural environment and self-reflection. It is, therefore, necessary to consider moral development from a number of perspectives such as neurology, psychology, sociology, and philosophy. Apart from attachment theory, attribution theory, family systems theory, various theories of moral development and Baumrind's theory of parenting will be discussed as they become appropriate.

So, to reiterate the questions that this challenge brings forth:

- What part does inheritance play? and how do the genes provide a mechanism for influencing morality?
- What part does the early experience of the child in his relations with his parents play? Does it matter to the future moral development of the child what the parents do?

- Do later influences, for example peers and schooling, have more powerful effects than earlier parental ones? Do the stages of development create a discontinuity that precludes the history of the child or is continuity the more evident force?
- Are there particular parental and educational practices that promote civic virtuous values and standards, and how could citizens and governments implement such practices within the community?

This thesis is only concerned with schooling and peer relationships to the extent that attachment style and child rearing practices promote the attitude within the child that favour or discourage the influences from the outside world. Therefore, these latter questions will only be touched on to this degree.

### ***8.3. Theories of Moral Development***

Turiel provides a comprehensive review of the history of the approaches to moral development which I will use to provide a background for the chapter [Turiel, 1998, pp863-932 ]. According to Turiel, early ideas include those of Freud and Durkheim. Durkheim suggested that through the participation of adults in the social group they became “attached” to and in turn they became respectful of the group’s norms and authority. People tend to abide by the moral rules prevalent in that society. Freud believed that the immediate needs of the individual were often in conflict with the long-term needs of the species for survival. He posited the concept of an ‘id’ or primitive aspect of human nature that sought immediate gratification of basic ‘drives’ for food and sex. This ‘id’ was in conflict with and usually under the domination of the ‘superego’ a rigid, punishing introject that, in its concreteness and single-mindedness, seems a caricature of the individual’s parents. Thus Freud stressed the importance of parents in the development of the child’s moral character. Both Freud and Durkheim note the role that intra psychic and external forces take in an individual’s social behavior.

Following on from these beginnings, Skinner proposed a theory of learning cultural norms through contingent reinforcement. Moral values are learnt by the simple positive and negative consequences that follow the actions of the individual. Piaget developed a more sophisticated theory of social transmission which was reconstructed by individuals through their life experiences. For Piaget, the thinking person may modify their values as a result of new experiences that alter their perceptions and understandings. He noted

that moral judgments are judgments about relationships, that is, whether or not they are respectful, cooperative and just. Skinner and Piaget emphasize the cognitions and habits that are involved in moral reasoning.

Kohlberg, however, could find no clear cut evidence to support either Skinner's or Freud's theories. He supported Piaget's model that children were oriented towards social relationships. He noted through his research that children made judgments built on emotions like sympathy, love, respect and attachment. He suggested, contrary to Freud, that these judgments were supported by, rather than in conflict with, biology. Kohlberg defined moral reasoning in stages that corresponded with Piaget's stages of cognitive development. The stages move from the sensory-motor stage where moral reasoning depends on the authority of the parents, through the stage of concrete operations where children reify rules to formal operations in adolescence where the individual is free to make finer judgments about ambiguous situations through their capacity to consider priorities when moral values are in conflict. Kohlberg's model has been subject to much research that has confirmed some of his ideas. Research using this theory has also shown that there are similarities in the stage development across cultures, at least to the third or fourth stage.

Kohlberg's stage theory has been criticized by Gilligan among others as not representing the moral thinking of females [Gilligan, 1982]. She described two "Moral Injunctions": that of justice and the logic of equality and reciprocity, the autonomous self; and that of care and the logic of relationships, the attached self. These injunctions she considered defined different gender based values. Most research, however, has failed to find much gender difference in development using Kohlberg's stages [e.g. Walker, 1989, consistent with others]. People use both injunctions depending on the context they find themselves in.

Turiel's paper highlights the history of the dichotomy between opposite views of infancy that seem to have cycled in favour. At one extreme the infant is born bearing 'original sin' or at least, an antisocial bent that requires that the child's will be broken, whilst at the other extreme there is the idea that infancy is a blissful, innocent state that we all hanker to return to. The belief current among most psychologists [e.g. Kagan, 1993] is that the infant arrives with an innate set of potentials some of which are pro and

some asocial. The social life of the child may reinforce the development of one or other side.

Despite Kohlberg's recognition that emotions have a motivational force his theory is a cognitive one. Hoffman [1975; 1995] proposed a theory of empathic development that included cognitive and emotional factors. Initially babies, he said, are not empathic but by 9 months or so infants are capable of empathic distress even before they can differentiate themselves from others. Empathic distress means for Hoffman that the baby feels the distress, for instance the sadness or anxiety, of the parent. "This capability to empathize may have evolved from the capacity of mammals to provide nurturant parenting for their young." [Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p38] By the time the infant is about 18 months old he can differentiate himself from others and is capable of feeling both empathic distress and compassion, but since he remains egocentric he may use inappropriate means in attempting to relieve the other's distress. Two to three year olds however recognize that others have their own feelings, thoughts and emotions [see Chapter 7]. They are capable of rudimentary role taking. They have developed a firmer boundary between themselves and others. They can find the real source of the other's distress and relieve the other in more appropriate ways. With language acquisition they become able to empathize with a broader range of complex emotions, but remain situation specific and transitory. By 6-9 years old, children can react to general plights of a group or class of people [Hoffman, in Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p133; Turiel, 1998, p876].

The review so far has pointed to development of moral reasoning and of the capacity to empathize. The next section deals with the place innate emotions might have in the process of forming moral behaviour.

#### **8.4. Genes and Morality**

There are a variety of ways that people conceive of infants' inborn endowments. A common belief has been that infants are naturally egoistic savages requiring taming and strict governance. Locke [in Mahoney, 1991, p34] proposed that they are "blank slates" on which all their character was inscribed through learning. Recently the logic of evolutionary theory and close observation of children and young animals have brought many child development specialists to the view that infants are born with pro social tendencies. Pro social behaviour as defined by Eisenberg "...refers to voluntary acts that



are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals while altruism requires that these acts are intrinsically motivated rather than for personal gain.” [Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989]

Moral standards and practices vary widely across different cultures. Nevertheless, there do appear to be a number of universally acknowledged prohibitions suggesting, as Kagan [2000] has pointed out, that there may be a genetic component. He suggests that there is a “..set of emotional states that form the basis for a limited number of universal moral categories that transcend time and place.” He goes on to say that “Each culture and historical period presents a unique profile of provocative conditions for a few unpleasant feeling states, and special opportunities for actions that prevent or alleviate these states.” He wonders whether this early capacity to have a sense of right and wrong might be an accidental accompaniment to the development of the capacity for empathy or if it is a necessary requirement in the socialization of aggressive and destructive behaviour.

Kagan proposes that there are five evolutionary-based emotions comprising: anxiety, empathy, responsibility and guilt, fatigue or boredom and confusion or uncertainty. A sixth surely is necessary. Certainly, very young children display positive emotions and affiliative bonds with others.

Rather than being egocentric at birth, Kagan is suggesting that we are born with the tendency to act in pro social ways. The feelings of distress that an infant displays when a significant other is hurt or upset were noted by Hoffman [1995]. This infant distress has been called empathy by some researchers and sympathy by others. Kagan claims that this ability to experience distress has a genetic basis. No doubt this distress can be modified, even overridden by environmental factors. The other emotions Kagan believes to be innate (guilt, boredom and uncertainty) also exert strong stimuli to act and interact in ways that will allay them.

A further point that favours the importance of emotion and genetics in moral development is the work done on the psychology of delinquent and criminal behaviour. Antisocial behaviour has been extensively researched and the theories of its aetiology usually include a genetic component of 30-40% [van Ijzendoorn, 1999]. In this case temperament is considered the basic inherited factor. A fearless temperament increases

the likelihood of antisocial behaviour. The assumption is that fear of the consequences of one's actions is a necessary component in the internalization of social values. Thus parental disciplinary strategies and the attachment relationship between parents and child seem particularly important in the outcome for a particular child [Eisenberg, 2000].

Kagan [1984] notes that “ Humans are driven to invent moral criteria.” [p152] This seems to include the idea of free will so important to most humans, as well as the idea that we like to have a reason for our actions and a meaning to our lives. These desires or drives may well be genetically based. We want to persuade ourselves that we are doing a virtuous thing, the right thing, the good thing [Kagan, 2000]. We care about what others, especially those near to us, think of us. We care about what we think of ourselves. This anxiety, which may conflict with our selfish desires, may also have a genetic basis.

There is some evidence, then, to suggest that we are born with the ability to feel distress and the desire to act to avoid it. Anxiety seems to be a survival tool that is generated in situations that seem uncertain including when an intimate person is themselves distressed. As we develop our abilities to think we can reduce our uncertainty by creating reasons for happenings and later still even meaning to our lives. We may also be born with the propensity to take on personal responsibility for what happens around us. This is in keeping with Freud's belief in the infant's ego-centrism, and along with the desire to reduce anxiety, a factor in the final development of moral values.

Discussing the research social scientists have done to investigate cooperation, fairness, reciprocity and trust, Anderson [2000] summarizes the results saying that they show that “..people are willing to cooperate, reward cooperation, and punish uncooperative behaviour even when it is not in their self-interest to do so, and that they correctly believe others are willing to do the same.” She quoted Mansbridge in agreeing that there are three basic human motives: self-interest; love of others (i.e. empathy); and duty (i.e. responsibility). While these findings do not directly provide evidence for a genetic origin, the generality of the findings point towards some form of inherited tendencies.

Thus, there are several ways genetic factors can be of influence, yet there is ample evidence, which I will come to later, to suggest that cultural factors play a vital role in defining what is considered, in that society, a virtue or a vice. Babies probably start life

pro social rather than antisocial or neutrally asocial. Most babies seem driven to gain and maintain a comfortable emotional state, their pro social activities are a means to that end.

Finally we must consider the question about the continuity and stability of pro social behaviour. Summarizing a literature review Eisenberg states:

“The bulk of the evidence indicates that children’s prosocial dispositions show appreciable degrees of consistency across situations and stability over time..... The findings are congruent with the theoretical position that there are fundamental and lasting prosocial dispositions residing in individuals as general traits or states.” [Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p22]

There are good reasons to believe that most of us are born with the natural capacity to act in prosocial ways and that parenting can nurture and encourage this capacity rather than using the punitive techniques considered necessary if it is believed that infants are born with purely selfish interests.

### ***8.5. Morality and Early Development***

Psychoanalysis, social learning theory and theories of cognitive development have all proffered models for the way children learn moral behaviour [Eisenberg, 1995]. Hoffman’s theory of moral internalization is confined to the way different discipline techniques lead to differing moral outcomes. It is also a stage-based model in which the growing child moves from empathy through making judgments and finally, to the internalization of the motivation to act.

Cognitive and social learning theories have been widely researched and on the whole have been confirmed as providing rational explanations for some moral decisions [Walker, 1998; Coley et al, 1983; etc.]. However, there is a scarcity of research on the socialization of moral reasoning, on Hoffman’s theory and on the internalization of values. Since most people consider morality involves the behavior being congruent with one’s beliefs the concept of internalization, of making the values one’s own, is important. By the age of two a child can already empathize with another’s distress, and will become distressed himself when unable to meet standards imposed by his parents [Fonagy, 1999; Eisenberg, 2000]. A year or so later a child has developed a sense of self which leads to her conscious awareness of intentions, feelings, standards and goals, she compares herself with her peers seeking social approval and has begun to identify with

an adult of the same sex and so defines sexual standards. As noted earlier genetics plays some part in these attributes. What part, then, does the context of family life play?

I want to suggest that at least two features of early experience are important to promote pro social values:

- Firstly, the attachment relationships that the child and each parent constructs with each other; and
- Secondly, the way the parents begin the process of socialization through prohibitions.

The attachment research literature presented in earlier chapters has found that relative to their insecurely attached peers, children who feel secure in their intimate relationships:

- Exhibit earlier, greater flexibility and resilience in their engagements with their worlds;
- Exhibit and experience themselves as more competent in a variety of realms;
- Are more likely to engage in exploratory behaviour and to remain behaviourally organized in the face of novelty and stress; and
- Report higher self-esteem. [Mahoney, 1991, p171]

Others [for e.g. Fonagy, 1998] have shown that secure attachment is important in the development of a healthy sense of self and of the ability to self-reflect. The sense of self and the capacity to reflect on one's own intentions and actions is clearly critical to the development of a conscience. These abilities become available to the child in their third and fourth year and they lead to the ability to compare the self with others especially with peers and with the seeking of social approval. Finally, it leads to the ability to identify with others, for example, with a same sex parent who then provides standards for the child to follow in their sex role. All of this is vital to moral development. [see Eisenberg, 2000 for a fuller treatment of this process and for references to the research evidence].

Stilwell et al [1997] notes that the findings of their research:

“...support(s) the thesis that infantile needs for physical and emotional security combine with developing empathic responsiveness in the formation of a sense of oughtness in the personality. This sense of oughtness, acquired early in development, becomes the relational, affiliative motivator in conscience functioning, providing the context for value formation, moral-emotional responsiveness, and moral agency. As caretakers introduce

prohibitions and demands into the child rearing process, the child learns that compliance maintains security and harmonious feelings.”

Children learn what they and others ought to do or not do. Stilwell et al maintain that children under 7 years old are exquisitely sensitive to their parents approval and disapproval. The link between their desire for approval, their needs for security and their ability to feel an empathy with a parent who is upset, powerfully reinforces the child’s motivation to behave in the ‘right’ way. This link, Stilwell et al report, is weakened in children insecurely attached when the child may be ambivalent about, or resistant of the relationship with the parent. Kagan puts it this way “I believe the major consequences of an attachment is to make the child receptive to the adoption of parental standards because the child is reluctant to tolerate the uncertainty implied by anticipated signs of parental indifference or rejection.” [1984, p63] The child, at least initially, is most likely to develop models of self and other based on the parent’s own models.

These capacities of the development of oughtness, of the sense of self, of the ability to empathize, are activated when thinking about and evaluating moral issues. The secure child’s greater self-esteem and readiness to explore their inner self and the outer world provide a base for their pro social attitude, while their more secure relationship with their parent allows them to attach a greater significance to their parent’s views. Secure attachment is a factor, then, in early moral development. [Stilwell et al, 1997].

Parents attempt to socialize their children through example, teaching, disciplining, and encouragement. Children learn through identification, habit formation, copying and practicing. They test the boundaries; they explore both the freedoms and restrictions of their social world and the fantasies and affects of their inner world; they try to come to some accommodation with both realms and later in life find rationales for their beliefs that fit their level of development.

Stern points out that “..well before the end of the first half of the first year of life, the infant has a primitive sense of agency, object, goal, and instrumentality.” [1988, p92] He suggests a model that he calls a temporal-feeling shape to describe the infant’s experience and divides this ongoing progress of life into “proto-narrative envelopes” [p88], each of which describe a plot of action leading to crisis and finally resolution. (Damasio, a neurologist, describes a somewhat analogous concept in his hypothesis of a proto-self where he believes there is a nonverbal narrative with a beginning, middle and

end, each end the beginning of a new sequence. [1999, p170-190] ). I want to use this concept of a proto-narrative to imagine and illustrate the early stages of moral development.

A practical example is of a 15 month old infant who has approached the CD player a few times in the previous weeks. Each time a parent has sternly said 'No' shaken their head and led the child away, perhaps distracting her with another toy. The innate sense of curiosity accompanied by a positive affect has steered the infant towards the CD, but the parent's approach and actions take the edge off these feelings and drive. This is a proto-narrative:

1. action: the move to the CD;
2. a crisis: the infant's curiosity conflicting with her desire to please the parent - may be partly innate but augmented by the attachment relationship; and
3. resolution: the wish for a harmonious relationship with the parent is activated resulting in the cooperation with the parent, and subsequent renewal of positive feelings when the parent appears happy with the infant again.

One day the infant approaches the CD and just as she is about to touch it she stops, turns to look at the parent, shakes her head and stands a few seconds. The proto-narrative has changed, just at the high point of touching the CD the drive to please disrupts the activity, the drive to explore decreases. The child is beginning to internalize the prohibition. The parent's reaction of agreement with the child's shaking her head and subsequent smile and pleasure at their child's obedience reinforces the child's new behaviour. It may be that the infant has acquired a fantasy from the parent's previous disciplining that surfaces to help her control her impulse to touch. The fantasy would be a composite of visual, auditory and emotional images of the memories of the parent's reactions and the child's inner state at the time. Perhaps to hold this fantasy alive the infant needs to see the parent and act out the parent's role in this case by shaking her head.

The child learns to enact a rule before he can express it or make it conscious and be able to articulate it [Vygotsky, 1986]. I think the above example provides an illustration of this embodiment of the rule and its link to fantasy with the internalization of the parent. No doubt there are other ways of internalizing a rule, particularly through the use of fear.

Parents have an important role here. They provide a secure enough base from which to adventure; they provide a consistent enough response when teaching the rule; they reinforce the child's own attempts at control both by mirroring the child's body actions as he copies his parents previous ways of stopping him, for example shaking his head; and they reward the child for his obedience. Clearly there are many opportunities for parents to fail. It is as well that children try so hard to please and that parents only have to be "good enough." [Winnicott, 1971, p10].

Empathy is said to thrive in an environment that:

- satisfies the child's emotional needs but discourages self-concern;
- encourages a child to identify, experience and express a broad range of emotions; and
- provides numerous opportunities for the child to observe other people's emotional responsiveness. [Schaffer, 1996, p214].

Similarly, following Hoffman's ideas and recent research in the field, Eisenberg [2000] noted that:

"..the development of sympathy in children has been associated with:

- (a) parents being high in sympathy,
- (b) parents allowing their children to express negative emotions that do not harm others,
- (c) low levels of hostile emotion in the home,
- (d) parental practices that help children cope with negative emotions, and
- (e) parental practices that help children focus on and understand others' emotions."

As I have noted various authors differ in their definitions of empathy and sympathy. In the above quotations I understand Schaffer's use of empathy corresponds with Eisenberg's definition of sympathy. The main point I wish to make is that the child rearing practices used by parents are important in the development of their child's socialization into a caring, empathic person.

### **8.6. Morality and Emotion**

The mention of emotion adds another dimension to morality. Eisenberg [2000] said that philosophers have recently agreed that "..emotions help people to distinguish moral features in specific contexts, to motivate moral behaviour, and to undercut immoral

behaviour.” She continues with “Emotions can [also] play a communicative role by revealing our moral values and concerns to others and ourselves.” This latter role for emotion is the role played by a parent as noted by Schaffer in the previous section.

Eisenberg describes “moral” emotions such as embarrassment, guilt (that is regret over wrongdoing), and shame. She notes the differences between guilt and shame which have to do with the degree of focus on the self. The self is exposed and feels inferior in shame while guilt is less focussed on one’s personal identity. Shame is said to lead to avoidance and guilt to apology, confession and restitution. Guilt has been shown to be associated with adult empathic responses when guilt is considered as separate from shame. Eisenberg explains that “Emotionally well-regulated children would be expected to manage their emotional arousal so that they are not overwhelmed by feelings of shame; moreover, behavioural regulation would be expected to underlie some markers of guilt such as reparation.” While, she notes that there is a little research evidence for this at present, what there is tends to be compatible with these expectations [Murphy et al, 1999, provide some evidence from their research]. Earlier chapters of this thesis have set down the evidence that attachment and emotional regulation are linked. The securely attached and the emotionally well regulated coexist. Now I am able to add the link between emotional regulation and the development of guilt as a guiding moral emotion.

Eisenberg also differentiates empathy that is based on feelings of distress from that based on sympathy. This leads her to predict that “...people who can regulate their emotions and emotionally related behaviour should be relatively likely to experience sympathy rather than personal distress.” [2000] I take this to mean that children who can control their sense that their self-worth is attacked will be more able to focus on the other than the damage to themselves. As a result, the secure child is again at an advantage. Eisenberg’s review of the research literature in this area leads her to conclude that, while there is much inconsistency in the results, sympathy tends to be linked to emotional regulation and temperament. Children who are temperamentally emotionally intense need parenting that focuses firmly on the child being informed of the feelings of others. Despite this, Eisenberg’s review proposes a connection between empathy and emotional regulation.

Kochanska [1991] talks about two developmental processes in the emergence of a child’s internalized conscience:



- the development of guilt and anxiety associated with actual or anticipated wrong doing; and
- the development of a capacity to overcome the impulse to act.

She found that parental discipline that de-emphasized power over and instead focused on the child's internal feelings of arousal associated with wrong doing resulting in a more internalized conscience. Her study, she said, "...supported the hypothesis that the child's self-regulatory ability may pave the way for the future development of internalized regulators of conduct." [Kochanska, 1991] As far as attachment is concerned, she points out that its "...quality may be closely related to the child's internalization of maternal standards and the subsequent development of conscience." These ideas are similar to Eisenberg's, Stern's and Kagan's as described earlier. They all emphasize emotion as the foundation of later development. They also infer that secure infant attachment provides a solid foundation for the development of moral behaviour.

In a recent study of 4 year old children, Laible and Thompson [2000] found that in their American, white, middle class sample, securely attached children had more emotionally open conversations with their mothers. These mothers made frequent reference to feelings and moral judgments, while the children themselves also referred to these feelings and judgments when talking themselves. Further in the securely attached group, emotionally laden discourses between child and mother related to multiple dimensions of early conscience development (that is, more behavioural internalization, more guilt after wrong doing, and a committed form of compliance). They also noted that shared positive affect was related to early conscience development. In other words, conscience development was encouraged when securely attached children and their mothers were regularly engaged in conversations where feelings and values were discussed. It is clear from this survey, that the parent-child relationship, by helping the child regulate his feelings and understand the feelings of others, is important in the early development of moral behaviour.

There have been several attempts to classify parental child-rearing practices. The most well known is Baumrind's separation of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles [1993]. Others have used dimensions of social warmth and social power to divide the permissive style into indulgent or neglectful [Rowe, 1989, p283]. In a similar

manner families have been classified along dimensions of cohesion: enmeshed to disengaged [Minuchin, 1974]; or centripetal to centrifugal [Stierlin, 1972.]; and dimensions of structure: open or flexibly structured with clearly defined hierarchy, closed with a rigid, rule governed structure, or with a random structure [Kantor & Lehr, 1975]. Each of these typologies hypothesizes that children reared in different ways turn out differently with different moral behaviours. It is evident that secure attachment is insufficient, by itself, to account for the development of an ethically responsible citizen. As well as assisting the child to construct a secure attachment the parent's skills in socializing their child is important.

Some tentative conclusions about the type of parenting that is valuable in the development of moral behaviour can be made. They are:

- Supportive and warm parents who encourage autonomous thinking and respect the child's attempts to be autonomous [Authoritative parenting<sup>3</sup>];
- Stimulating the child to think about values by the parent's conversational style [induction] [Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989];
- Involving the child in moral discussion [Gunnore, 1999];
- Enforcing high standards of behaviour [Haste, 1987; Kagan, 1984]; and
- Modeling these standards themselves [Parke & O'Neil, 2000: see also Schaffer, 1996, pp275-276].

Parents using these strategies are likely to rear pro social children [Eisenberg, 1995]. These parenting features have many parallels with those presented earlier that are conducive to the development of empathy, therefore reinforcing the argument that parenting is a vital factor. As a result of her extensive research Baumrind concluded that

“...authoritative child rearing is the only pattern that consistently (and significantly) produced competent children ( that is, children high in social competence and social responsibility) and failed to produce incompetent children ( those low in both social competence and social responsibility) in the preschool years and in middle childhood... And this was true for both boys and girls.” [Baumrind, 1988 in Eisenberg, 1989]

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3 Authoritative parents are both highly demanding and highly responsive. ‘Demanding’ refers to the claims parents make on their children to become integrated into the family by their maturity expectations, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront a disruptive child [Baumrind, 1993].

This section highlights the ways parents can shape the early moral development of their infant by encouraging the infant's innate pro social potentials. Basic to this shaping process is the attainment of a secure attachment relationship between the parent and infant. A secure attachment, as I have noted earlier, provides the infant with the context most conducive to learning from and imitating the parent, incorporating the parent's value systems and developing empathic skills [see Chapter 7].

Edwards [2002] also considers that the securely attached relationship supports the development of "mastery". She notes that a secure attachment helps the child to cope with possible feelings of frustration and anxiety as he/she "struggles" to attain mastery over his/her bodily functions, emotions and environmental difficulties. Parents assist in this process by tolerating the child's struggle as they explore, providing assistance only if necessary, by engaging in meaningful conversations and by encouraging make-believe play.

This section has argued that the attachment relationship is important to the incorporation of the basic elements of moral development. While later developments and experiences may be more fundamental in the final morality a child espouses, these early stages may make the difference between the next stages being easier or harder to accomplish.

### ***8.7. Conceptualizing Moral Processing***

At this point in my discussion I want to digress somewhat to provide some order to the various processes that occur during moral development. Adults process their life experiences in complex and parallel ways. The process can be considered as a number of segments which are richly linked together.

In any moral 'event', whether it is a reaction to another's behaviour or to our own intentions or desires, several mental tasks take place, starting from the perception of an experience and ending with an action (or non-action). Some of the important tasks include:

1. **Moral reasoning.** That is, what meaning can we give to this event? Is it right or wrong, good or bad? The development of this mental task is well conceptualized by Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning which seems to rely on the maturation of mental capacities, on learning and on experience.

2. **Moral feelings.** The awareness of feelings of guilt or shame if we believe that we are responsible for wrong doing, and/or of feelings of empathy and sympathy if another is in distress. Hoffman's stages of empathy development are useful to conceptualize the development in this segment. Emotions become an aspect of the task of evaluation when they are consciously felt. They are also a major engine in motivation.
3. **Evaluation.** The process by which the above two processes along with an analysis of the specific situation are brought together to determine the kind of action to take.

A child sees a dollar on the floor, perhaps it was dropped by the child just ahead? Should I pick it up and offer it to the other child? Will that child be truthful if it is not his? Will the teacher see? Will I feel guilty even if not caught? What will my mother say? These are some of the thoughts, conscious and semiconscious, involved in the child's decision.

The moral process is shot through with basic assumptions we all adopt to make sense of our world. These "world views" about who we are; where we are; what's wrong; and what is the remedy?, underpin our reasoning and our evaluation and so our actions [Jensen, 1997]. The answers to these questions which form our basic presumptions about our world, are created by us in the context of our socio-historical culture.

The following section uses these processes to discuss the next stage in growing into an ethically responsible citizen.

### **8.8. Growing Up**

In section 8.4 I reviewed the development of infants' rudimentary understanding of social behaviour including rule-based activities and in section 8.5 I considered the beginnings of moral emotions. I pointed out in each case that these developments occur embedded in relationships, principally at these early stages, in relationships with parents. In this I want to trace the further development of the growing child's moral understanding and behaviour. I will concentrate on three main aspects:

- the learning of moral rules;
- the incorporation of an understanding about the self; and
- the world outside and Altruism.

I will emphasize the part played by parents in these developments whilst also recognizing that as the child moves out into the outer world, schools, peer groups and others have an increasing role that may modify, change or reinforce his/her previous understandings. I emphasize the importance of a family climate in which the child continues to feel secure.

In Chapter 6 I argued that what parents do matters to the future development of the child and in the preceding section I have furthered that argument to show that they are important to the child's moral development as well. The question of the influence of parents in later childhood, when the child is spending much of his/her time in school and with peers, remains to be considered.

I will be arguing that one way that the parents affect their child's moral development is through their transmission of a particular world view or belief system to their child. Similar to the mental working hypothesis that maintains the attachment style from infancy through to adulthood which I described in Chapter 5, a child's world view becomes a guide for the child as they traverse school and peer group. In the following paragraphs I indicate the way the child incorporates social rules. Moral rules and world views are particular subclasses of social rules.

### **8.8.1. Moral Rules**

Stilwell et al [1997] note that "As caretakers introduce prohibitions and demands into the child-rearing process the child learns that compliance maintains security and harmonious feelings", joining the early infant experiences to those of the toddler and later. This is a summary of my argument so far. Haste has worked extensively in this field of research. I am using her paper *Growing into Rules* [1987] throughout the next few paragraphs.

Kohlberg's stages seem to be related to neurological maturation with an increasing ability for the child to think more abstractly, to take the perspective of the other, and to consider social factors as well as self-centred ones [Coley, 1983]. Thus these stages have an innate origin only partially dependent on the context.

It is the context within which the child's neurological maturation occurs, however, in the persons of the parents initially, that makes the particular demands and prohibitions. The particular rules about what is acceptable and what not are set down. "Don't lie to

me”; “Don’t touch the plugs”; “Boys don’t hit girls”; “It’s naughty to throw your food on the floor”; “Kiss Daddy good night”; are all rules although not all might be thought of as moral ones.

Rules are the “grammar of social relations”. They carry the appropriate way to interact socially and they carry the way that particular culture understands, that is, makes sense of, the world [Haste, 1987, p162]. Haste classifies rules as prescriptive, descriptive, normative and evaluative. Prescriptive rules may be moral (good or bad) or conventional (right or wrong); breaking either of them results in sanctions. They presuppose an ideal to aspire to [p164]. For example, “If you hit him again you will have to leave the room”. In this case, the ideal is that of self-control. Normative rules provide order in the world, therefore they have a functional explanation which is then evaluated as OK or otherwise. For example, “If you touch the plug you might get hurt, plugs are dangerous” that is, not OK.

As pointed out above the child first learns the rules through interaction with others. He can enact the rule but cannot express it or make it conscious, perhaps because he is still preverbal [p166]. Over the years the growing child increases his understanding and justification for the rule from accepting it as given by authority, through to noticing its social function, to finally in adolescence, recognizing that it is based on some social principles and so is able to develop other rules from these general principles [p169; see also Kolberg, 1976].

As adults we unconsciously adjust our messages to the child’s level of understanding [Haste, 1987, p176]. “Lying is naughty and Mum doesn’t like it”; “It hurts when you get hit that’s why you shouldn’t do it”; “People wont trust you if you steal and you’ll have no friends”; “Society needs some trust between people to function so we should try to be trustworthy”. Children learn the content of the rule and they learn a structure for conceptualizing it according to their level of development. This “scaffolding” that we use to teach our children has been theorized by Vygotsky [1978]. He noted that teaching required the teacher to adjust their messages to “..the zone of proximal development..” of the particular child.

The content of the rule provides the acceptable ways of interacting with others while the rationale provides the child with a way of thinking and reflecting on their experience.

The social process whether as a dyad (parent and child) or in groups (family, peer group, etc.), operates as a catalyst and consolidation for individual thinking. The socio-historical framework defines what is possible, legitimate and functional to the system. These social messages join with the child's previous experience, the emotional state the child feels and unconscious drives and fantasies to be evaluated before the child acts [Haste, 1987, p172].

Moral rules seem to be distinguished from conventional ones very early in life. Children can recognize that moral rules have a more universal application [p177]. A person in their role as a 'good' citizen may keep conventional rules such as driving on the right or left side of the road, paying taxes or shaking hands. But the moral rules, such as kindness, politeness and helpfulness, become part of the attitude the citizen maintains towards all others.

In this section I have argued that the child incorporates the family's moral values to a greater or lesser extent.

### *8.8.2. World Understandings and Beliefs*

Jensen [1997] has provided another angle to morality. He criticizes the cognitive approach to morality promoted by Piaget and Kohlberg. Cross-cultural findings are said to conflict with the purely cognitive approach mainly in the area of moral reasoning, that is, the explanations of why a behaviour is right or wrong. Jensen suggests that an individual's world view underpins their moral reasoning.

As I explained earlier, a world view includes some answer to the following questions:

1. Who am I?; and
2. Where am I? [Jensen,1997]

The first question can be further subdivided into:

1. Am I the final arbiter of what is right and wrong, in other words, am I autonomous? or is there some other authority such as the community or a divinity to which I owe an obligation?; and
2. Am I, in my relationships with others on an equal footing or is the social structure hierarchical? It could be argued that this issue is unimportant to morality though the belief in the equality of all humans may be dependent on the answer to this question.

The second question deals with whether we live in a world that is the only one we will know or if we are here to prepare for the next world. It also concerns whether society is, over time, tending to improve or to deteriorate.

Clearly the answers to these questions are fundamental. They explain who decides what is right, what moral obligations we have, as well as what rights. They are the basis for our reasons for our moral acts and for the sanctions we impose on others who fail to act in these moral ways.

We grow into our world view. Most of us have not thought it out or even thought of it at all. It has been imbibed so early in life through the rules precepts and obligations we learn; we enact it each time we interact with others so it has become “the natural order” of things, not to be questioned or altered without serious consideration. Yet this world view is culture bound. Nsamenang [1992] defines a world view as

“..a culturally shared window through which we peer into the universe. Although the world view derives from the culture it is a personal [psychological] frame of reference . Being inseparable from what we perceive as reality, world views are conditioned by our intuition and experience.”

Geography, history and economic factors feed into a culture’s world view. In turn it influences the culture’s social beliefs, domestic organization and its use or abuse of the environment [Schaffer, 1996, pp214-215; see also Bruner, 1987, p91]. For instance, Japanese mothers emphasize social routines that bind the child to the mother while American mothers emphasis a more impersonal orientation. This demonstrates the difference in world views between these cultures [Rothbaum et al, 2000].

Reiss adds further dimensions to world views which he terms a paradigm [1981, p174]. The question “Where am I?” includes for Reiss the sub questions: is the world knowable and discoverable or a mystery? and is it ordered or chaotic? [p3] The answers to these questions influence how individuals resolve problems in their daily life. An individual who believes his/her world is knowable and orderly will clearly resolve their problems in a different way from one who understands his/her world to be mysterious and/ or chaotic. In such problem solving situations Reiss also distinguishes between those who attempt to resolve the issue on their own and those who cooperate with others to try to solve the problem; and between those who delay resolving the problem to allow for new



ideas and those who prematurely close off at the first possible solution. [pp196-199] He models a family paradigm that is transmitted to its members each time a problem arises in day-to-day life through the rituals, habits and patterns in the problem solving process [p225]. A family that can deal with their problems by patterns of negotiating together, seeking information from its members and who view their world as being orderly and understandable will typically find solutions to their problems that are satisfactory. The point to make here is that these understandings of the world are usually only partially conscious yet are communicated to each family member daily in their interactions reinforcing individual beliefs on a regular basis.

The world view, according to Jensen [1997], forms the foundation for moral reasoning, which in turn suggests an evaluation of the rightness or wrongness of a particular action. This judgment initiates an action, the response to which, from the other parties feeds into the original world view re-enforcing it or chipping away at its assumptions. Reiss has provided a process whereby the parents and family transmit their world view to their offspring.

Margolis [1998] brings another point of view. I have previously noted how she postulates that there are several selves or, perhaps "ways of being" to use Stern's phrase. These selves are culturally and historically formed. They are brought forth in relationships with unique ethics and ways of boundary marking. She describes six selves, three "primary" and three combinations of the "primary" selves. Each self occurs in a distinct relationship. The "exchanger self" develops a relationship with strangers using an ethics based on equality. It respects individuality, rationality, emotional control self-interest and freedom from obligation. It lives in the present and in linear time in which relationships are symmetrical [pp74-75]. The "obligated self" relates in close dyads such as parent-child; husband-wife. Its ethics are based on need, responsibility and justice; on care, protection and dependency. Its relationships are interdependent and complimentary. Its time is cyclical; its obligations have a past history [pp74-76]. These "selves" have some correspondence to Gilligan's logic of justice (exchanger) and of care (obligated) [1982]. The "cosmic self" occurs when the self tries to relate to the whole, to timelessness and universal melding [Margolis, 1998, pp101-102]. The combinations are: the "reciprocal self" of friendships; the "civic self" in relation to the nation; and the "called self" of the selfless server [p114].

Each of these selves have their own value system and form internal working models characterized by:

- having emotional and cognitive components;
- existing out of awareness;
- are shaped by relational experiences;
- tend to have some stability over time; and
- providing rules for the individual to guide both behaviour and feeling in various relationships, to forecast and interpret other people's behaviour and so plan their own response [Schaffer, 1996, pp138-139].

They no doubt develop as children grow. Margolis suggests that the obligated self begins in early childhood; the exchanger self after starting school; the others even later so that the civic self may not appear until late adolescence. If these processes occur as Margolis suggests, the obligated self which is a moral self, is created within the early parent-child relationship and so will be influenced by the nature of its attachment [1998, pp110-111]. While Margolis' concepts capture some of the complexity and emotional underpinning of our ethical life they fail to take account of the different world views within a culture. Gender, class, race, sexual orientation, age, family history etc. are just some of the possible factors that affect how one views the world.

The work around how people explain the cause of events is another useful concept to help understand the influence parents have in promoting particular beliefs in their offspring. People offer different causal explanations for the same events and thus react in different ways. This claim is made by Peterson et al [1993] in an article on learned helplessness. He argued that the general determinants of particular causal explanations are:

1. Information about actual occurrences of events in the world; and
  2. An already abstract belief about the causes of particular events- causal schema.
- This aspect seems likely to be determined by the individual's world view since a causal explanation answers the questions of: is the event unique or part of a more overall pattern? is it an attribute that is stable over time or is it something only relevant to this situation? is the cause something in myself or due to other people or external events?

A consistent style in the child's explanations begins to emerge at about 8 years old. Research in middle class families with non-working mothers showed that the explanation styles of the children replicated those of the mother; the father's style was unrelated to either spouse or children [Peterson et al, 1993].

This leads to the question of whom the children learn their moral explanations from- does it all or mainly occur within the family or do peers, teachers and more general cultural factors such as the media, and day-to-day experiences in society play a more substantial part? No doubt there is a middle course which recognizes all these and other factors as important without assigning a priority to any one. Yet as noted by Schaffer [1996, p264] the home is an extraordinarily effective learning context as a result of:

1. Being the centre of a very extensive range of activities both domestic and outside; much wider than preschool;
2. The adult and child having a common past while preschool only deals in the here and now;
3. There is more frequent opportunities for one-to-one interaction;
4. Learning is embedded in contexts of great meaning for the child; and
5. The relationship between learner and teacher is highly emotional while in school it is more impersonal.

I have argued that a child's belief systems are laid down early in life and that parents are major players in the particular system their child constructs. Parents and children live within a culture which is defined as a community with shared beliefs [see definition Chapter 2].

### **8.8.3. *Altruism***

A culture can increase the likelihood of altruistic behaviour. A culture, that assigns many tasks to children, in which the mother works much of her time in the fields and where large families encourage older children to assist, show the highest levels of altruism [Whiting, 1975]. Similarly culture can affect peer relationships. For example in some places there are few opportunities for peers to be in contact, in others there are not enough children of a similar age range so mixed age groups are formed. In contrast Kibbutz communities the children are brought up solely among their peers [Schaffer, 1996, p315].

While in Australian society peers can be very influential, parents can, to some extent, determine their child's peer relationships. They educate the child in how to interact with peers, they attempt to manage the child's social life and in younger children at least probably can succeed, and finally, as explained earlier, they are the main socializing agents by providing the strategies required. Furthermore the quality of parenting influences the child's competence with his/her peers. Parental involvement, warmth, control of a moderate degree and a democratic attitude seem important in the development of this competence [Schaffer, 1996, p334].

A dramatic example of these qualities is given by Oliner & Oliner [in Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p75]. In the study cited the participants were interviewed in depth. It involved 406 rescuers of Jews during World War 2 and a matched sample of non rescuers. Findings highly consistent with other studies of altruists were summarized by investigators in this manner. Eisenberg states:

“It begins in close family relationships in which parents model caring behaviour and communicate caring values. Parental discipline tends toward leniency; children frequently experience it as almost imperceptible. It includes heavy doses of reasoning- explanations of why behaviours are inappropriate, often with reference to their consequences for others. Physical punishment is rare...parents set high standards they expect their children to meet, particularly with regard to caring for others. They implicitly or explicitly communicate the obligation to help others in a spirit of generosity, without concern for external rewards or reciprocity. Parents, themselves model such behaviours, not only in relation to their children but also toward other family members and neighbours. Because they are expected to care for and about others while simultaneously being cared for, children are encouraged to develop qualities associated with caring, dependability, responsibility and self-reliance are valued because they facilitate taking care of oneself as well as others...Because of their solid family relationships, such children tend to internalize their parents' values, increasingly incorporating standards for personal integrity and care within their own value systems. While they may articulate such standards as cognitive principles, they experience them viscerally. They provide an organizing framework for their life activities and assessments of right and wrong. Even minor infractions distress them, and fundamental violations threaten them with a sense of chaos. (Oliner & Oliner, 1988. Pp249-251)”

Similarly Eisenberg reports that “..fully committed freedom riders reported nurturant, respecting, and loving relationships with their parents during childhood and continuing through early adulthood..” [1989, p76]. These examples illustrate the power of family

upbringing and the parent's personality in the development of children's prosocial behaviour.

These points are supported by Edwards [2002] who asserts that the foundation of prosocial behaviour is in the attachment relationship.

#### **8.8.4. Peers**

As children mature peers become a greater influence. Turner's self-categorization theory of 1987 is a useful contribution to changes occurring at this stage. He recognizes that we categorize ourselves in various ways and on a variety of levels ranging in inclusiveness from 'me', the unique individual, to very broad such as Australian or human being. Our category can vary from moment to moment depending on social context especially the relative salience of the group at the time and the presence of a comparable or contrasting group. Margolis' selves might be a different way of describing the same phenomena. The peer group follows the family group as a formative influence on the growing child. Groups tend to increase the differences from other groups and the similarities of members within the group making the group a potent force in socialization at a time of life when, in middle childhood, one is most conformist to their peer group. [Turner, 1987] Here one finds new ways of being with, of new explanations of self, others and society, internal working models.

Parsons points out that the parent can only equip the child to do his best whatever that may turn out to be. "What is best is not in their control but in the hands of the school and peer group that will help locate the child eventually in the hierarchy. The child faces the requirement that he make good but also has the problem of defining what good means...one makes good when one is approved of therefore all power is in the approving group." [1964] The secure older child can, however, decline to accept the values of a particular group as a result of their higher self-esteem and autonomous thinking. Schneider [1999] makes the further point that "...the skills learnt in harmonious family life, and the security it provides, may enhance relationships outside the family, whatever the relative importance of families and friends for social support." [p184] Such children can seek a peer group more attuned to their own opinions. This idea is in keeping with the constructivist approach to development whereby the child actively constructs his/her environment to reinforce their previously held beliefs.

I have discussed the way we change as we move through the diverse relations that make up our day; the differing feeling states, habits of thought, patterns of behaviour, implicate assumptions, and ethical standards that constitute each practice of social interaction brought forth by our reactions to the various contexts in which we find ourselves. I have discussed the way children gradually build up these schemas or internal working models as they inhabit their lives and extend their horizons beyond the world of the family. Each successive developmental stage paralleling the maturing of cognitive processes, brings to bear a more sophisticated lens on the patterns and understandings of the past adding to and at times overlying these older, but still available parts of the self. This new mode of thought is also used to interpret and assess the current events and experiences, laying down further options and ways of being. Within all this, I have argued that the parents have a unique importance by transmitting the basic groundwork, by their continuing influence through modeling, admonishment, praise, explanation and guidance, and by their continuing affection, warmth and moderation.

### **8.9. Summary**

In earlier chapters I have argued for a citizenship based on a responsible and ethical stance. I have suggested that in this fragile world citizens need to think of the long-term and community consequences of their decisions and actions. The moral values our children internalize will determine the nature of their adult citizenship. This chapter has revealed that parents have a vital part to play in this area of their offspring's development. Their ability to engender a sense of secure attachment in their child, their own moral standards and behaviour and their usual approach to socializing their child, are all found to be important factors in this process. This supports the proposition that a family climate with appropriate moral and ethical standards is important.

To return to the questions posed at the start of this chapter, we humans are innately prepared for a social life. We are born with the needs to join with others, to seek meaning, to do what is right and good, and to feel for others. Later influences such as peers and schooling are important but they can only shape an already solidifying person. Family life and the child's increasing neurological maturity continue to contribute. The moral values of social responsibility and a sense of obligation, empathy and compassion, helpfulness and caring, respectfulness of others, and the motivation to do

the right thing are predicated on the internalization of a conscience. This is created more readily in the already securely attached child. The society in which the child and family live is also a factor and it is to that I turn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 9. THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETY

### ***9.1. Introduction***

In the introduction to Chapter 7 I mentioned that two questions relevant to my thesis were left to later chapters. These were the questions about moral development discussed in Chapter 8 and the question of the influence of culture on the growing child. This chapter will deal with this latter question, finalizing the second part of this thesis. Finally, I will draw together some conclusions from the arguments established in Part 2, Chapters 5-9. These chapters chart the progress of an individual from their early childhood attachment relationships to their adult attitude and conduct. In Chapter 5 I introduced empirical evidence to argue that a secure attachment in infancy gave the infant a better start to life than an insecure one. I also argued that parent's attitude and behaviour with and around the infant contributed to his/her attachment style. Chapter 6 continued the theme that parents matter by arguing the case for the influence of parents on the growing child. I again, turned to empirical evidence in Chapter 7 to show that people with a secure attachment style as adults were more likely to also exhibit some of the attributes I had previously connected to 'good' citizens. Lastly in Chapter 8 the relationship between attachment and morality was explored. I concluded that while there may be insufficient evidence to conclusively argue that a secure attachment style was linked to the development of a 'good' moral citizen, there was a strong implication that secure attachment is correlated to:

- Firstly having parents whose attitude and behaviour is conducive to conveying the ethical and moral standards of 'good' citizens to their children; and
- Secondly that the securely attached child was better prepared than the insecure one to accept and internalize these moral principles and precepts.

An examination of the pathway from infant attachment style to adult social behaviour endorsed the assumption that it had continuity. Bowlby [1980, p229 ] put forward the hypothesis that an internal working model is the means whereby an individual's attachment style is maintained over time. This mechanism seems too narrow a concept to support the beliefs about self, others and the social world that the evidence presented in these chapters suggests are linked to a secure attachment. In this chapter therefore, I



will explore the possibility of the internal working model being a subset of a broader system of beliefs.

The developmental pathways travel through time. In this chapter I will consider the pathway through space that moves between the individual child or adult citizen and the historical socio-cultural nation/state of which he/she is a member. This highway can be traveled in both directions. In Chapters 3 and 4 I discussed the possibility that citizens could influence their government. In this chapter I will extend this analysis to show that the history, culture and government of the state impacts on the individual and visa versa. In Chapter 5 I pointed to evidence that suggests that infants are active partners with their parents in constructing their social environment within the family and in Chapters 7 and 8 I argued that parents and family life are powerful forces in shaping their child's values and beliefs. In this chapter I will review the connections between the family and its environment to show the reciprocal links between the two and I will deal with the dynamic nature of these interconnections as a balance between stability and change that permits some continuity without determinism. Having argued for these various connections, I can propose that while appropriate parenting provides the context for the infant to construct a secure attachment style and that this style is likely to lead to the individual growing into a responsible, caring adult, it is not necessary for the social climate to be unqualifiedly favourable.

My argument will follow this line:

1. Individual attachment working models can be subsumed under a broader concept of assumptions made about the world and self in the world.
2. These assumptions are initially formed within the family.
3. The family's own assumptions are partially dependent on those of the surrounding culture and ruling authorities.
4. There are complex interconnections between the individual, family, and socio-cultural context that allows some changes to occur over time.
5. I will argue that a 'good' society has many 'good' citizens and that a fair proportion of 'good' citizens in a nation can foster and maintain a 'good' society.

The chapter starts by reviewing some of the theories of cognition in order to lead into a discussion about the way cognitive beliefs are held and transmitted within families. I then consider the reciprocal influences between society, culture and the family.

## **9.2. Cognitive Theories and Attachment Theory**

In this section I aim to place attachment theory in the context of similar theories and models in order to provide a linkage between attachment concepts and broader psychological and sociological models. I will argue that such a link exists and later in the chapter, that it provides the nexus between attachment and citizenship. I will discuss three points:

1. Attachment theory as a constructivist, social cognitive model.
2. The similarities between attachment theory and other social cognitive models.
3. The integration of attachment theory into broader psychological and sociological models.

The importance of the first two points to this thesis is that if similarities are found, then the argument for the attachment concept of an internal working model as a mechanism that permits the continuity of attachment behaviour into adulthood is supported and extended. Furthermore the stability of other assumptions about self and the world into adult life adds to the argument that childhood experiences are important to adult outcomes. The third point, if upheld, allows a linkage between attachment and citizenship to be considered.

In Chapter 8 I explored the way family life contributed to moral development. In this chapter these ideas will be developed further to argue that family life, and in particular the child's attachment style, are the main sources of a child's understanding of the world outside the family. These understandings, which become deeply held beliefs, provide the child and later adult with information about how to fit into the family, about what the outside world is like, about how to orientate oneself toward it and negotiate in it. These beliefs can, then, be an invitation to engage in the world or a barrier to involvement.

Throughout this discussion it has been assumed that these different understandings of the self and others are maintained by mental processes. The relevant questions are: Do other theories make similar assumptions? What parental, family and societal features are important in their development? And what bearing does an already secure attachment have on their successful internalization?

Theories and models start from different premises and are designed for different purposes yet their concepts may overlap since each is modeling an aspect of the whole,

that is, human beings in their social and physical environment. Thus models and theories that have similar concepts and processes that parallel each other support each other especially when there is empirical evidence for these concepts from different fields of research.

### *9.2.1. Attachment Theory as a Constructivist, Social Cognitive Model*

Bowlby noted that “Every situation we meet in life is construed in terms of the representational models we have of the world about us and of ourselves.” [1980, p229] In Chapter 7 I mentioned that Bowlby used a cognitive theory to provide the basic components of the representations or internal working models that he theorized were the way attachment styles persisted into adulthood. He said:

“In the working model of the world that anyone builds, a key feature is his notion of who his attachment figures are, where they may be found, and how they may be expected to respond. Similarly, in the working model of the self that anyone builds a key feature is his notion of how acceptable or unacceptable he himself is in the eyes of his attachment figures. On the structure of these complimentary models are based that person’s forecasts of how accessible and responsive his attachment figures are likely to be...” [1973, p236].

He goes on to explain that one can create two or more working models of one’s attachment figures and of oneself and that these models “..are likely to differ in regard to their origin, their dominance and the extent to which the subject is aware of them.” [p238] Later, Bowlby notes that the “..data reaching (the child) from different sources may be regularly and persistently incompatible.” [p362] In such conflicting situations various pathways can be taken, some more functional than others.

Clearly, Bowlby was using a cognitive model. Since he also maintained that attachment starts out as a relationship which informs the representation the child creates, his theory is also both social and constructed, or socially constructed.

### *9.2.2. Attachment and Other Social Cognitive Models*

Around the same time as Bowlby was developing his theory others were also interested in cognition. Kelly, for instance, developed a psychology of “personal constructs” that takes as its fundamental postulate that “A person’s processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events.” [1955, p46] Constructs are

defined as ways in which some things are construed as alike and yet as different from others [p105]. It is not just a pair of attributes or even a dimension or scale because depending on where you are in relation to the polar opposites you describe your position in different ways. Kelly used north/south as an illustration [Procter, 1981, p351]. Constructs are not necessarily conscious or verbalized. Systems of constructs, arranged hierarchically, can be used to predict events and the behaviour of other people [p352]. Kelly proposed that people act like scientists by construing their world as theories which they could use to anticipate what is to come and which they evaluate against the outcomes, altering their theories if discrepant. Similarly Bowlby believes that the working models of self and other constructed in the attachment relationship are also used to forecast what others will do, and what the self will feel and think. As a consequence of this anticipation the individual can decide on a course of action the results of which he will evaluate against his theory. Bowlby's model could be considered as a restricted version of Kelly's constructs.

Bowlby used Piaget's theory of cognitive development to show the process of internalization of representations and how these may be distorted due to neurological immaturity. However, rather than as distortions, Kelly would consider these constructions as theoretical propositions that fitted the facts at the time but are later open to revision. Yet, for as long as the theory continues to predict events and so is validated, it is useful no matter how distorted it appears to others. While Kelly recognizes the possibility of revision of one's constructs (or theories) he points out that "...the changes that take place from old to new constructs do so within a larger system." [1955, p83] Kelly defines a theory as a way of binding together a multitude of facts that can be used to develop hypotheses which can be tested [p23-24]. Hypotheses are "brittle" and can be shattered while the theory is more "elastic" so rarely stands or falls on the outcome of a single experiment. Theories at a high level of abstraction as psychological constructs tend to be, are especially flexible [p24]. It seems that he, like Bowlby, is saying that it is not so easy to upgrade one's constructs and theories once they are formed.

Causal attribution theorists propose that the beliefs a person holds about the causes of events can be informative about a range of aspects of his/her life. Stratton et al [1986] explain by stating that "Substantial evidence exists to suggest that a knowledge of the

beliefs that a person holds about the causes of events, called causal attributions, can be informative about a range of significant aspects of his or her life.” The authors suggest that these beliefs are “..an important component of... [the person’s]... attitude to circumstances.” Presumably the way individuals construe the cause of an event will influence the way they anticipate the future. These beliefs, I suggest, are mental processes with some similarity to the internal representations conceived of by Kelly and Bowlby.

Various dimensions or headings have been proposed to classify causes. Stratton et al [1986] refers to three:

1. The effect may be specific to the cause or may be more widespread - specific/global.
2. The effect may be repeated each time a similar situation arises or it may be a singular event- stable/unstable.
3. The cause may originate in a person or may be situational- internal/external.

These dimensions are bipolar and so similar to Kelly’s constructions. It is of some interest that these dimensions have parallels with some dimensions of world views that will be referred to later in this chapter. Stratton et al [1986] suggests it is possible to define by observation and through discussion with the individual, an individual’s attributional system. Learned helplessness began with animal research. It has been used as a model for depression. The model was criticized as inadequate for a number of reasons, so links were established with attribution theory to rectify some of these problems [Munton, 1985]. Munton, however, goes on to critique attribution theory itself by saying that “There is considerable evidence to suggest that causal beliefs not only affect attributions made for specific events, but they also affect the intake and use of causally relevant information.” Rather than a linear causality assumed by many attribution researchers, “..a circular conception of causality is necessary, in which cognitions are viewed as an element in a system that includes person, behavior, environment and feedback.” [1986; see also Abramson et al, 1978]

Peterson et al [1993] provide an extensive review of the learned helplessness model noting that “Different people offer different causal explanations for the same event and thus react in different ways.” They suggest a branching tree decision process starting with whether or not the event is controllable. The answer to which interacts with the

explanatory style of the individual to set off a train of decisions. Peterson incorporated Rotter's Locus of Control concepts to augment their theory. It could therefore be argued that these bi-polar branching decisions are compatible with the dimensions used in attribution research and by Kelly. Peterson et al [1993] considers that a consistent style begins to emerge when children are about 8 years old due to their cognitive maturation around that age. They also provide evidence that points to children of both sexes explaining events in a similar way to their mothers and not to their fathers. It is worth noting at this point that in one study harsh, inconsistent treatment during childhood was found to be correlated with a pessimistic explanatory style forty years later [Peterson et al, 1993]. While Peterson et al do not take the systems view that is described by Munton, they provide further support for the way one's beliefs about oneself and understandings about the world guide behaviour and can feed into negative affect (sadness, anxiety, anger) if the individual believes he is helpless to alter an outcome.

These forays into the literature about personal construct theory, attribution theory and models of learned helplessness can be compared with each other and with attachment theory. The internal working models guide attachment behaviour. The various personal constructs provide an individual with a theory of their world. Causal attributions that form an explanatory style, beliefs about one's ability to control one's environment, whether or not that environment is usually stable or chaotic, and to whom to attribute responsibility for a particular situation all have common features. They are all mental processes involving cognition (which may or may not be conscious), they are all guides about to how to act in specific contexts, and they all qualify as assumptions or beliefs. They all have some stability over time. There is evidence that attachment and causal assumptions, at least, develop during childhood. Later in this chapter I will hypothesize that the infant attachment relationship is intimately involved in constructing not just attachment assumptions but a wide range of other beliefs as well.

### ***9.2.3. Attachment Theory and Dynamic Systems Theories***

Attachment theory while it starts within a relationship, becomes essentially an individual psychology where the internal working model is the recipe for future social relations. Procter points out that Kelly's theory was designed to be used in individual psychotherapy. It becomes problematic when more people and groups of people are introduced [1981, p354]. Attribution theories suffer from the same problem.

A systems model of the family is common in clinical work [see Hoffman, 1981, p284]. Systems have a structure or organization and a process, that is, the interactions within the family and between it and its surroundings as it travels through time. Structure and process are reciprocally linked [p103]. Families can be described as dynamic systems similar to the dynamic system model favoured by some developmental psychologists to describe individuals [see Chapter 2]. That is, families are systems that move through time with resultant adaptations to new situations.

Heard [1982] writes about the possibility of using attachment theory to understand family behaviour. She explains that “The goals of both attachment and care-giving behaviour .... exert an involuntary pull on the behaviour of every member of the family- a pull that cannot be influenced by rational planning, even in adult life.” Effective care-giving in family group situations, she said “..is aided immeasurably when both the caregivers and the seekers have formed and are using internal representations of self and other that predict good enough assuagement in that particular setting.” For Heard, biological underpinnings drive attachment and care-giving behaviour which is also affected by past experience and internal working models of each family member. The biological genesis of these behaviours provides a motivating force round which anticipation and meaning guide decisions and actions. Family interactions reciprocally “..influence the internal working models that each person builds for him or herself in action with others or when acting alone.” [Heard, 1982] As I understand Heard’s ideas, she considers that family organization is maintained by its members having the ability to predict each other’s behaviour and feelings and that changes can take place in the way a member construes an event as a result of their reciprocal interplay. The changes that occur do so at the level of the internal working model. She explains this interplay:

“Representations of the self are thus unavoidably complex; furthermore they are integrated one with another and built up over time as some situations repeat themselves and new ones are encountered, a process analogous to the dynamic equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation as described by Piaget (1971).” [Heard, 1982]

Another approach to the connection between family life and attachment is made by Donley [1995]. She points to the importance of the context in which the parent-child dyad is embedded which she views as “..an emotional unit..” where “..each member’s functioning is so interdependent with that of other members that no relationship can be

understood out of the context in which it is embedded.” So, for example, the mother-child relationship cannot be independent of the mother-father relationship. She follows Bowen’s theory of family systems in considering the family as an emotional unit with biological and historical roots, with a network of extended family members and a tendency to homeostasis so that “..individuals automatically respond to others in ways that serve to balance the unit as a whole.” She conceptualizes triangles of three family members as the basic building blocks of the emotional family unit that stabilize family life and to which each member is attached.

Donley’s ideas about attachment to a system rather than an individual appear unusual, however, if belonging was the word used instead of attachment it might be easier to accept. We do sometimes feel we belong to a family, a peer group, a nation. Taken in this way Donley seems to have extended attachment theory to include the development of attachment to or belonging to a group. She stresses that dyadic relationships have to be seen against the background of the rest of the family’s life, that is as at least triadic. Her proposal adds an emotional element that may be absent from Heard’s model. It supports the importance of family life and the stability of the family’s interaction patterns.

Byng-Hall is another clinician and theorist who has established links between attachment theory and family systems. In a 1991 paper, he and Stevenson-Hinde give an example of family therapy in which they recognize interactional patterns suggestive of attachment and that these patterns were maintained within the family system. Byng-Hall, in an earlier paper of 1985, using a family systems theory, points to the “..oft-repeated redundant circular sequences of family interaction...” which he calls the family script. He goes on to explain that the family script is represented in each family member’s personal script. He describes scripts as implying a plot that gives meaning to the pattern of interactions which are linked to belief systems. Family scripts, he defines as shared belief systems. They provide “..a ready guide for action..” and “..some stability for the family.” In 1995 he states that:

“ In attachment theory, parents are conceptualized as providing a secure base from which the child can explore. Family therapists, however, need a systemic concept that goes beyond the parent/child dyad. The concept of a secure family base is proposed, in which a network of care is made available to all family members of whatever age so that all family members feel



secure enough to explore, in the knowledge that support is available if needed.”

Heard’s concept of care giving and assuagement has been deepened and extended to the whole family and Byng-Hall has added the idea of exploration in the confident belief in a safety net. He and his co-worker illustrate their ideas with clinical evidence. Each of these authors connects attachment theory to family systems and recognizes linkages between attachment relationships and the assumptions developed and maintained by individual members.

I turn now to personal construct theory in order to review its links with families and systems. Kelly’s theory did not include a well worked out understanding of how the child developed. One of the few comments he made on this issue is that “His father and mother are likely to have been contextual elements in a great many of the personal constructs which a person has formed, particularly his role constructs.”[Procter, 1981, p359] To overcome Kelly’s omission, Procter proposed a “Family Construct System” based on Kelly’s Personal Constructs to describe the family’s sharing of certain common premises. He noted that “Construct theory’s basic assumptions and its open concern with process rather than content makes it epistemologically compatible with systems theory.” [p352] Procter assumes that “For a group of people to remain together over an extended period of time, each must make a choice, within the limitations of his system, to maintain a common construction of the relationships in the group.” [p355] They negotiate “..a common family reality..” and “..behave together in a ‘dance’ of mutual anticipation... The family constructs provide the members with alternative slots so they do not necessarily have to be in agreement. They do, however, share a finite set of avenues of movement.” [p355] He explains that “People carry their family-negotiated realities around with them and use them to construe individuals and relationships between people with whom they come into contact.” [p357]

Alexander and Neimeyer [1989] argued that “..an awareness of family dynamics is integral to an understanding of the development and maintenance of an individual’s personal construct system”, that there is reciprocity such that “..individual’s constructions also mold and shape the family’s constructions..” and that “..the family system itself can and does develop certain jointly held constructs that influence not only its internal functioning, but affect its interactions with the environment.” They suggest

ways that a child evolves his/her personal construct system. Firstly, the infant's relationships with family members "...serve as elements from which nascent constructions concerning self and world are gradually forged. By providing the predominant validation backdrop against which the infant tests emerging constructs, the family furnishes the pre potent context for development of the self." They go on to note that the child anticipates the events of family interactions and his predictions are validated or invalidated by what happens. Since family life is usually organized around a series of recurrent events the child's predictions will usually turn out to be valid. Secondly, the family construction about "...the order and meaning attributed to events.." is considered necessary for an individual's sense of belonging and the family's sense of identity. This in turn, "...furnishes its members [with] a certain sense of security through consensual validation." These ties of belonging and security are no doubt a powerful incentive to conform to and internalize the family's understandings of each individual member, of the family as a whole and of the outside world.

Other authors support the view that the development of attributions can be identified as a family process. For instance Munton and Antaki [1988] reason that:

"The information on which one makes an attribution is partly information in the social domain; the behaviour to which an attribution might arise happens in the presence of others and may affect them. This in turn will be likely to change the environment in which the explainer operates, changing their attributions, causing a further change in behaviour and so on. In any close group such as a family, such interdependency of information and attribution is highly likely."

They continue by commenting that "The attributional interpretation of family systems theory would suggest that attributions are held by members in order to consolidate positions and to avoid confrontation with problematic events in family life." Their study of ten families showed "...that attributional change can be identified as a family as well as an individual process."

Munton and Antaki's study supports the hypotheses made by the previous authors that there is a reciprocity between an individual's attributions and their experience within the family, and between that experience and the impact of the outside world (in this case a therapist) on the family and its members.

Feixas [1990] compared Kelly's theory and other models of therapy. He notes that both personal construct theory and systems based family therapy models are constructivist and concerned with meaning. He recognizes differences between Kelly's and Maturana's concepts [see Chapter 2] but argued that these differences are irrelevant when their epistemological similarities are considered. Feixas continues by acknowledging Procter's and Reiss's [Reiss will be discussed later in the chapter] contributions as he argued for an integrative framework.

These authors have variously attempted to integrate models linking attachment theory to family systems theory and personal construct theory with family systems. I have also suggested that attachment representations (internal working models) are special sets of constructs, as are causal attributions and beliefs about self and the world. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesize links between all these points of view. The connections are likely to be complex, reciprocal, and dynamic.

Each of these models also stress the importance of the family in the development of the individual child's understandings and beliefs. In earlier chapters I have set forth evidence to suggest that attachment is a basic building block on which understandings about self and others rely. If this is so, early childhood experience is a vital factor in the internalization of all our beliefs and assumptions.

### ***9.3. Family Styles and Attachment***

I have already introduced evidence from some empirical studies to support the hypothesis that attachment representations, beliefs about self and others, and one's world view are connected and that the family is the original context in which these assumptions are created. This section will report further empirical research to support this hypothesis.

Reiss [1981], whose work was introduced in the previous chapter, claims that the basic organizer within the family is a central repository of shared assumptions, constructs, fantasies and myths which he calls the family paradigm [p212]. Reiss studied families, both in laboratory and home settings, in order to find some of the dimensions of this paradigm that distinguished families from each other. These dimensions are explanatory systems that seem to the family to be real or true, are logical and stable in the face of constant change. He identified four family types:

1. The consensus sensitive family that is protective of its members in a hostile world. They are bound together in the face of an unpredictable world of which they are fearful and mistrusting. They tend to be closed to experience.
2. The distance sensitive family where members are preoccupied with their own lives. They act as if they were isolated individuals open to outside influence yet feeling hopeless, helpless and remote.
3. The achievement sensitive family where members compete with each other for success. This competitiveness absorbs their energy so they tend to be less open to experience.
4. The environment sensitive family that is cooperative, is open to new experience and views the world as ordered and discoverable. [p12]

Reiss said that “..at the core of our proposal is this simple idea: family interaction patterns themselves are the repository of the family paradigm.” [p224] These patterns are described not only as speech but also nonverbal behaviour that is organized into regular recurring patterns. These patterns help to shape the family’s experience of time (planning, the distinctiveness of events etc.), space (privacy between members, etc.), and the synchronicity or lack of synchronicity of family events (due to lack of coordination, competitiveness, or conflict, for example). [pp224-240] Reiss backed up his theory with extensive laboratory research that appears to support it.

A clinical example of the way family practices serve to protect the family from an uncomfortable issue is given by Pollner and Wikler [1985]. They cite the case of a family with a five and a half year old child whom the parents describe as behaving normally for her age at home but the parents believe that the child refuses to do so in public; acting as if she was retarded. Each of the four older family members, both parents, an 18 year old and a 10 year old sibling agreed with the description despite the psychological evaluation of the 5 year old as being severely retarded. It was noted that the family found several ways to “..verbally or physically pre structure the environment to maximize the likelihood that *whatever* the child did could be seen as meaningful, intentional activity.” In one sequence reported “..the mother twice requested ‘Give Mommy the ball’; when Mary simply continued to stand while holding the ball, the mother said ‘You don’t want to give me the ball’ thereby narratively transforming obliviousness into a willful reluctance to give the ball.” Many other examples of the

family's ability to distort the facts and to interpret them in line with their preferred belief system were reported.

While this example is extreme it underlines the power of family beliefs and the constant reinforcement of them through continual interpretation of events in the light of the beliefs. All members of the family submitted to these interpretations even when faced with contrary expert opinion. This example supports the argument that families can maintain a boundary between them and the outside world. In this example the boundary is relatively impervious. There is a gradation from families with boundaries that are open and readily permeated to those whose boundaries are closed and impenetrable.

Another illustration of the way families try to protect themselves and their children from the outside world is given by Parke and Buriel [1998]. They note that instead of keeping the child "cocooned" within the family, the family might prepare the child with some "advance armour-plating". They cite an example where children are warned of "stranger danger", or of the dangers of wandering with stories of lost children and monsters who lurk in the bushes.

Reiss does not relate his theory to that of attachment but the research findings noted previously suggest that children with a secure attachment style are more receptive to their parent's discipline and moral outlook and that they will have a greater willingness to incorporate their parent's belief systems. Furthermore the families whose internal culture encourage the parents to act sensitively and respectfully toward their children are the families that are more likely to create attachment relationships that are secure. I suggest that the environmentally sensitive families described by Reiss are also the families that promote secure attachment. Donley's and Byng-Hall's work noted previously in section 9.2.3. are also relevant to this argument.

Cobb [1996] has expanded Reiss' ideas to include the attachment relationships. Following Reiss he defined paradigms as "...cognitive-level constructs (largely unconscious constructions of reality) or as procedural templates." The family paradigm is "...a shared cognitive construction or world view." I understand procedural templates to be that aspect of the paradigm that allows the family member to anticipate how to behave in relation to the other family members. Thus the daily rituals and ceremonies of family life are performed as each member plays his/her part using an internalized

template and enacts these rituals, reinforcing the template. Cobb studied 62 families with two parents and an adolescent (11- 15 yrs). Attachment styles were assessed using a questionnaire and the family's problem solving style by a card sort procedure created by Reiss that taps the family's shared beliefs about solving problems. He found an association between "...a family's paradigmatic approach to problem solving and an adolescent's quality of attachment to both parents." Families who were able to collaborate well and who creatively explored solutions to problems were also families in which the adolescents were assessed as having a balanced attachment style. Cobb suggested that the link between these factors was the sense of security that family members felt as they worked together. This research seems to confirm my suggestion about the correlation between environmentally sensitive families and those conducive to secure attachment development. Byng-Hall [1995] discusses "a secure family base" in a similar way. Future research could extend Cobb's work with the aim to investigate the family paradigms associated with different attachment styles.

This review of a number of different theoretical approaches to how children internalize particular views of themselves and of others supports the notions that:

- Families come to have a number of shared beliefs;
- These are transmitted to the family's offspring through the daily life within the family;
- The attachment relationships are important in the beliefs members construe about themselves and others; and
- Through these shared beliefs and their attachments members feel they belong somewhere.

In conclusion, this section highlights the importance of the family in shaping children's personal constructions of themselves and others. It furthers the argument that family relationships, especially the attachment relationships are a major factor in the way we come to think of ourselves and our world. Finally it is noted that changes can occur in the constructs we have created but the more fundamental and basic the belief, the more difficult and stubborn to change they become.

### ***9.4. The Family and the Outside World***

The family, too, is in a reciprocal linkage with society. Its assumptions and constructions are also formed through the interaction of guidelines created as the family moves through historical time, the social forces impinging on them, and the permeability of the boundary between the family and its environment. So I come to the final factor in this analysis which is the various links between different social organizations, cultures and families that comprise that society and that contain the understanding of society within them.

In the introduction to this chapter I suggested the metaphor of a path or roadway joining the individual to the outside world. A better illustration is that an individual's assumptions are a part of a wider system of beliefs and understandings that are held by a majority of that society. Before clarifying the connections I will say something about each of the parts of the system that I have identified. The wholeness of a system cannot be easily reduced to its parts and to some extent the parts I define are arbitrary.

#### ***9.4.1. The Historical Factor***

The history of a particular society is the base on which current events take place. It determines the beginning of a particular moment in time by shaping the norms that govern people's social behaviour and their child-rearing practices. The actual interactions that occur may re-enforce or alternatively, subtly or in crisis situations, extensively, modify the practices and constructs individuals use to guide them. Over time, if enough people's practices change, cultural norms will also be affected. In this way our actions quickly becomes history. Historical norms also partly determine the organization of government and its relation to the people.

An example of the influence of history on the present is given by Serpell [1995]. His essay traces the evolution of age-based curricula in education and the adjustments made as the practice is taken up by different societies. In Zambia the practice of age-based curricula remains as a remnant from its colonial past even though it is less appropriate to the local culture [p33-38]. Serpell cites Vygotsky's theoretical concepts as interpreted by Scribner to the effect that they are "...an attempt to weave three strands of history-general history, child history, and the history of mental functioning- into an explanatory account of the formation of specifically human aspects of human nature. (Scribner,

1985, p138)” [Serpell, 1995, p22]. Scribner added another strand - the history of individual societies [p23]. History then, is specific to the individual. Each personal history is formed from the accumulated history of human development, the particular history of the society in which the individual lives, the personal history of the individual’s experiences and the history of their intrapsychic functioning in the form of dreams, hopes, wishes, and beliefs. Serpell’s example illustrates the constraints imposed by “general history” as it interacts with particular societies with their own history. The social world is accumulated history. According to Bourdieu [1986, p246], everything is not equally possible or impossible, that is, we are constrained by our historical legacy in the choices we can make.

In Bourdieu’s view history provides the present with a theory of how to classify reality [1990, p78]. When we view reality through that classificatory lens reality comes to look like that. In his 1977 studies of the French educational system he defined three types of “pedagogic action”:

“Diffuse education: exerted by all the educated members of a social formation or group; Family education: exerted by the family-group members to whom the culture of a group or class allots this task; and Institutionalized education: by a system of agents explicitly mandated for this purpose by an institution directly or indirectly, exclusively or partly educative in function.”[p59]

Since my thesis is concentrated on preschool aged children the latter type of education is irrelevant, but family education and diffuse education correspond to the factors I have termed parental child rearing practices and “people’s interactions”. When these practices and interactions are taken together with Bourdieu’s understanding that history provides the way to explain reality and that that methodology is what is transmitted through education, it is possible to recognize some of the links between historical norms and everyday and parental practices. Our present reality is conditioned by these historical norms. This is illustrated in Figure 9.1. in the conclusion to this chapter.

In a paper that addresses the question of why China utilized violence in response to dissent, Ling [1994] suggested that the historical Confucian values of filial piety and respect for the authority of the elders led to the state being morally outraged by dissent and thus justifying violence. This paper also illustrates the historical genesis of a society’s beliefs and practices.



Historical factors include historical change as well as historical traditions. Scott [2000] analyzed the British Household Panel Survey. She noted that “..how people represent social change does influence their child-rearing values, even when controlled for age and education.” Those who deplored the lack of discipline in today’s society were more likely to endorse obedience over autonomy as the most important child-rearing quality. In keeping with the theme of this thesis, Scott’s analysis supported her hypothesis that “..ideas or beliefs about contemporary society are structured, in part, according to the experiences people had in the formative years of childhood.”

### *9.4.2. Governmental Factors*

Relationships between the governing body, the peoples’ values and their parenting practices are two directional, each modifying the other thus allowing for change over historical time. Lyth [1989] points out that social institutions arise through the efforts of human beings to satisfy their needs. Lyth writes that they: “..then become external realities comparatively independent of individuals that, nevertheless, affect the structure of the individual.” The institutions of government are examples of such social institutions. So, though bi-directional, the influential power of the relationship favours the state. The values espoused by the governing system can affect individual attitudes and behaviour as well as parenting practices.

Population policy is one way governments impinge on parents and families. Examples include China’s one child policy; laws on preventing abortion and contraceptive pills as in Ireland until recently; or forms of financial inducement to increase the birth rate as is being proposed in Australia at present. Policies on women and work such as subsidized child care may also impact on family life and child rearing practices. [Windebank,1998]

Different types of governance can have substantial effects on social behaviour. The more open liberal democracies permit a more open degree of social discourse when compared to a despotic dictatorship where fear and mistrust abound. “A traditional society- one conducive to an aristocratic elite- is a society in which authoritarian personalities abound..” [Bauman,1999, p9-10] While in cross-cultural and comparative studies Meloen [2000] found that the most significant components of the authoritarian political culture “..seem to be a traditional family structure and a culture characterized by hierarchical power relations and collectivism” [p124], thus showing the reciprocity between the populous and its government. Elster [1993], discussing the same

phenomenon, quotes Tocqueville to the effect that “..democratic institutions are shown to generate beliefs and aspirations that, in turn, support those same institutions.” [p102] It appears from the evidence presented by these authors, that the form of government tends to be mirrored in the structure of the family and in the personalities of individuals and visa versa.

Painting an ideal picture of democracy, Bauman describes it thus:

“Being liberal and democratic means ... [being] invitingly open and hospitable, thinking of the borders as places of encounter and friendly conversation rather than places of passport and visa control and customs checks. It means being inclusive, not exclusive - treating others as speaking subjects, assuming their right and ability to speak at least until proven otherwise, and hoping for a new light to come from exercising that right.” [1999, p1]

This ideal is far from being realized but its distinction from a picture of an autocratic state is clear. The values espoused and the behaviours derived from them lead to different interactions between people going about their daily lives and to different parental practices.

#### **9.4.3. Cultural Norms**

Culture is an amorphous, ambiguous term. It has many definitions. A “culture” is a “community of shared meanings”; or “a shared definition of the situation; or as a way of thinking, feeling and believing”; or in a negative manner, by defining it as something left over after explanations of “either genetic or pan human psychic traits have been eliminated.” [Bauman, 1999, p28] Kelly views culture as a shared system of meanings and that social processes influence individual construing [in Ross, 1996]. In the context of this thesis I use culture to mean a group of people who share ethical and conventional values to which they respond. It is, to quote Bauman, “..simultaneously a man-made and man-making entity.” [1999, p28]

Like families, cultures are maintained by formal and informal rules that provide members with the information to perform their expected roles and behave in the appropriate manner, and by rituals that help to bind the members together. These rules and rituals have developed from the beliefs on which that particular collectivity was founded. Beliefs, and the activities and taboos that spring from them, set the boundaries

that differentiate that collective from those around. They also tell the members something about themselves and their social world.

A further cultural factor is the way that particular society has constructed the relation between the family and the outside world. The permeability of the family's boundary between itself and the outside world, its openness or comparative closedness to outside information, is a vital factor in the growing child's approach to the influence of his contact with the surrounding society. The interaction between the security of attachment and the parental ideas, concordant with or discordant from the social norms, and of the permeability of the family's boundaries will determine to a large degree the child's willingness or otherwise to explore the outside world. For example, a child who has a secure attachment to his parents but who has learnt from these same people that the family is a safe haven in a dangerous world will have different expectations of other children and adults than a similarly securely attached child whose parents are actively and happily engaged with the outside world. An insecurely attached child, one who has trouble trusting his parents yet whose parents can function effectively in the world, may be able to gain more from a peer group than a child who has learnt to distrust everyone.

An illustration of the links between parenting and the surrounding culture is shown in the differences between American and Japanese cultures as outlined by Rothbaum et al [2000] in a recent article. They propose three dimensions that distinguish Japanese socio-cultural behaviour from that of Americans. These dimensions are:

1. individualism v collectivism;
2. individual-centred societies v situation-centred societies; and
3. independent conceptions of self v interdependent concepts of self.

The authors point out that, in their view, the American pole of these dimensions is individuation, which comprises autonomy, expressiveness and exploration, while the Japanese pole is accommodation which includes empathy, compliance, and propriety. While the authors agree that there are biologically driven aspects of relatedness common to all cultures, they consider that different cultures emphasize different aspects. Americans emphasize individuation, the development of which the authors call "generative tension" and which is characterized by a continual pull between the desire for closeness and the desire for separation. Japanese culture, on the other hand, emphasizes accommodation or "symbiotic harmony", characterized by a continual pull

toward adapting the self to the needs of others. The authors suggest a model of development in which these different paths generate different observable behaviour at the various stages of life from infancy to adulthood. From research findings they gather evidence to support their theory and show differing child rearing practices from infancy onwards. By adulthood the Japanese tend to consider maturity as the elimination of the boundary between self and other, while in America autonomy is the goal. Rothbaum et al explains that “..while [they] tend to assume parents’ behaviour influences the cultural differences in relationships..” in the two countries, they acknowledge that “..a third factor (such as population homogeneity and density, and the political, economic and kinship systems) may influence both parent and child.”

This example shows the influence of the cultural norms and the historical roots in the origin of the differing populations, and their economic and political structures in the societies studied. It illustrates the way different norms and expectations reciprocally affect parenting and adult interactions in the community through the socialization of the child. There may be some dispute about the details of Rothbaum’s analysis and the interpretation of the research but the linkages between the various factors is not in doubt. Rothbaum et al argued that neither the people in America nor those in Japan are perfectly adapted to their respective societies. The authors wonder if people at different stages of their life cycle might be more or less adapted with one society better meeting the needs of one age group while the other meets them better in another age range. Rothbaum et al [2002] criticize some attachment researchers who fail to take into account cultural differences. They argue that security of attachment may lead to different behaviours in different cultural settings. This does not, however, invalidate the argument that secure attachment may, in both societies, lead to more virtuous citizens.

Using personal construct theory to evaluate the core roles taught to Chinese and Western children, Harding [1980] noted that “..where Chinese emphasize social responsibilities, especially toward the family, Western children are socialized to value independence and individualize.” The same connections between culture and childrearing are present despite the authors using a different theoretical basis for their work.

Other examples of the interconnections between culture and child rearing include Brazelton’s description of an African tribe:

“The Zinzcztecos .... offer a “ simpler” model (compared to American practices) of child rearing, handing on and reinforced without apparent self-questioning from generation to generation. The result of their handling of babies seems to be to set up a mode of imitative learning that is adapted to the culture’s emphasis on equality and interdependence. The patterning for the analogue of these characteristics is made in the earliest weeks and months after birth.” [1977, p179]

Furedi [1997] recorded that German parents allow their children greater independence than American parents, “..based on the expectation that other adults will do the right thing.” [p128] It seems that Germans trusted their fellow citizens more than Americans trusted theirs and this led to different parental practices. These examples illustrate the transmission of cultural beliefs to individual and family members of that particular culture.

#### *9.4.4. The Importance and Significance of Links*

Parenting has been considered from a number of angles in previous chapters- from the building of the attachment relationship through sensitive or insensitive, warm or cold parenting; from authoritarian, authoritative or laissez-faire parenting; and from the angle of modeling values and beliefs. These parenting practices have been shown to be linked to different child outcomes.

I have also explained that parents bring to their relationship with their infant their own personal background and experience, beliefs about parenting, relationships and their sense of the place of the family in society, all of which have been gained from living in that cultural climate. The sense of attachment and belonging to a country is built up over many years from early childhood. In the absence, along the way, of serious or repeated traumatic experiences with the country or its authorities this relationship may have some similarities to the early template of belonging with a parent developed as a child. Thus, the adult in his/her role as parent, is influenced by his/her attitude to the prevailing system of government and that in turn, affects his/her dealings with their child.

Reiss expanded his family paradigm model to explain the links between the family and the environment. He explains that “..an underlying family orientation that we call a paradigm shapes the family’s shared conception of any specific social situation.” [1981 p262] These conceptions “..determine in large measure a family’s actual conduct in a social environment.” He continues by saying “After a sustained transaction with an

aspect of its social environment- for example, its neighbouring community -the family will achieve a certain type of *link* with that environment.” [p262] The family will also select aspects of the social environment with which to become engaged. This selection, and the type of links the family forms, feed back into the family’s construction of itself in the world, thus maintaining and stabilizing its paradigm [p263].

Reiss discusses the links families make with their kin, with the local community and with formal organizations such as schools, work places, professional and voluntary associations [p266]. As well as those that Reiss describes, the media, especially television, must play an important role in linking the family with the outside world. He typifies the links along three dimensions:

1. The medium, that is, the family member or members who are doing the linking and what authority they have. A child may be the link with the school, the whole family with a therapist.
2. The architecture, that is, the construction of the family’s link- their status within the social group, the openness or otherwise of the family’s boundaries, and their degree of engagement or coming to grips with the environment.
3. The motivation, that is, are the links coercive (dominated by outside factors), remunerative, normative (a commitment to the link because of the family’s attitude) or a mixture?

This model is a more detailed presentation of the links between community and family. I have added the working models of secure or insecure attachment to argue that securely attached children coming from an environment sensitive family would go forth into the world trusting, open to new experience and ready to learn. They would also, as noted previously, be able to reflect on their experiences, use their values to guide them and view the world with the least distortion. All these features are those outlined as valuable in ethically responsible citizens [see Chapters 5 and 7].

### 9.4.5. *Other People*

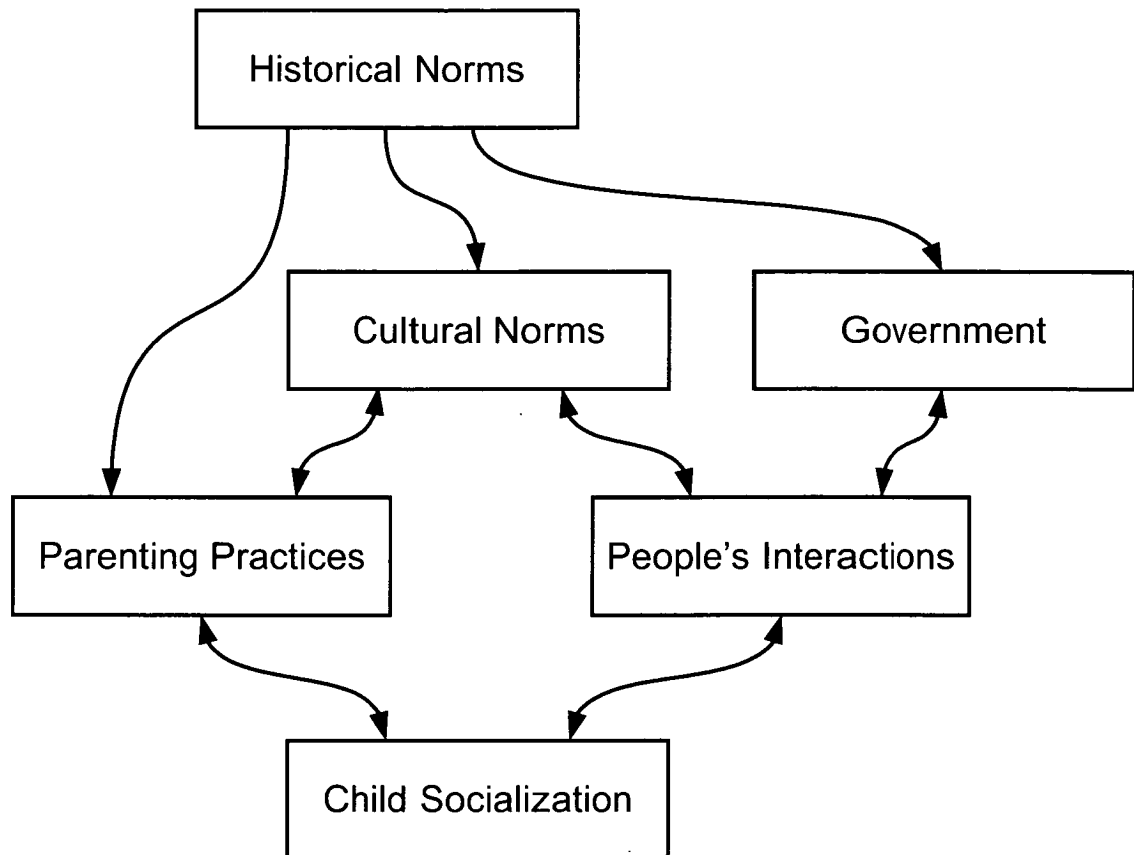
There may be some evidence that children go into each new situation fairly neutral to the outcome [Harris, 1998, p356], so that despite what they learn at home about family and society they may be able to come to trust others contrary to their parent’s beliefs. The world the child enters will, most likely, have been shaped by the same social norms. Parents actively select the district in which to live, the school their child will attend and,

often, the peers the child comes into contact with. [Harris, 1998, p358] The child, then, will probably meet children and adults who express attitudes similar to the child's own, so social norms are reinforced.

Imagine two securely attached children interacting together with a degree of openness to each other, in a preschool play area. It is likely they will be meeting in friendly interactions. But if one of the children in the interaction is insecure the relationship will be restricted. The secure child may attempt to relate in an open, friendly way but this overture may be rebuffed or not reciprocated. This idea is partially confirmed by the research, noted in Chapter 7, that children with a secure attachment style tend to be more sociable. Put another way, security creates an open, permeable boundary and, paradoxically, a freedom to be separate. Insecurity leads to a boundary that is relatively closed. In the avoidant style of insecurity the child is detached and closed off from social learning, while in the ambivalent/anxious style the child clings to relationships for instance with another child, but his alternate angry hostility and whingeing placation prevent him learning from experience.

#### **9.4.6. Conclusion**

The following figure 9.1. is an attempt to illustrate the links between these influences on child rearing. It is neither a complete nor sophisticated model but may suffice for the purposes of this thesis to show the embeddedness of family life and child rearing in the society in which it occurs. The model can be criticized for being simplistic and ignoring many other influences, nevertheless it provides a starting point from which to develop ideas about how the bringing up of children is tied to the prevailing social-culture and how that society creates adults who fit in to its practice.



*Figure 9.1. Relationships between beliefs and practices*

So far the theories I have discussed and the model I am proposing appear to promote stability rather than change, to be deterministic rather than flexible. It is to the possibility of change that I now turn.

### **9.5. Stability and Change**

Throughout the course of this chapter I have mentioned some of the factors that create stability in the individual's belief systems and in the family paradigm. A further example is research by Kulik et al [1986] which found that "...our self-images [are] likely [to] persevere in part because we are more apt to accept consistent behaviours largely at face value as dispositionally caused and therefore as further corroboration for the original beliefs." We tend to find ways to confirm our beliefs rather than change them.

The stability of belief systems is an important feature for my thesis. It permits the values and assumptions created in infancy and childhood to continue to affect the adult. But



change is also a necessary ingredient of my proposal. How else could 'good' citizens arise in less favourable or hostile environments? The altruistic individuals and families who sheltered Jews and other dissidents in Germany during World War 2 as reported by Oliner and Oliner [1988; see Chapter 8] is a case in point.

I have also pointed out, where possible, some of the ways changes in the family and/or individual can be understood. Bauman [1999] points out that stability and change are in constant tension within cultures. As individuals we feel a similar tension to maintain our continuity while changing to meet new situations.

Changes may result from:

1. Challenges to the whole system.
2. Miscommunication between the parts.
3. The tendency for humans to seek novelty [Mahoney, 1991, p104].

These effects are detailed in the following sections.

### *9.5.1. Whole System Challenges*

Examples of the effect of challenges to the total system include the effects of economic collapse on the individual and the family [some of the challenges to modern society and democracy are reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4]. One of many investigations of this phenomenon is a 26 year longitudinal study reported by Kasser and Koestner [2002]. Their study confirmed the findings of other researchers that "...children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to focus on values reflective of autonomy, relatedness, and growth motivations and are more likely to concern themselves with materialistic values to impress others." In the discussion of their findings they note that "...partial co-relations suggested that children's parental environment bore a significant association to their adult values, even after controlling for the effects of gender and both age-5 and age-31 SES."

Windebank [1999] quotes Calasanti and Bailey [1994] "...who insist that 'changes in the society at large do not necessarily presage changes in the household: family relations have their own dynamic and relative autonomy'." She uses a comparison of British and French mothering to argue that political policy might impact on the practical aspects of child care but that it has less impact on the mothers' understandings of their duties and responsibilities as parents.

I have already mentioned Reiss's proposals about the permeability or otherwise of the family/context boundary. Some families whose boundaries are relatively closed may be impermeable to wider social influence. On the other hand families that have strongly held value systems may be resistant to the influence from outside even though they may be classified as environmentally sensitive. Altruistic families would be a courageous example of such a situation.

### **9.5.2. *Miscommunication***

The links between the various factors illustrated by figure 9.1 are mostly bi-directional. Government policy, for instance, can alter people's activities but equally citizens can effectively input into government decisions. Children's temperament, intelligence, or other talents can steer their parents' practices as they respond to them or initiate activities of their own. Cultural norms are under constant revision through the activities of particular groups. Instances of the latter include the changes wrought by the women's movement and the gay rights movement.

At a different level of analysis there is the possibility of communication problems between the different parts of the model (system). One of these communication problems involves the liability for children and adults to distort the messages they receive.

Stern identifies four ways one's representations can deviate from reality:

1. By distortion - positive or negative;
2. By the dominance of a particular theme;
3. By the need to maintain narrative coherence; and
4. By the out of phaseness of their expectations.[1998, pp34-40]

While Stern uses these types to explain the parent's representations of their infant, the classification could also be used in understanding the parent's perceptions of the cultural world in which they are situated and the child's capacity to also construct a different schema from that of his parents and/or that of the society of which he is part.

From a linguistic, cognitive perspective, Bandler and Grinder [1975, pp43-53] give a number of examples of the way language may fail to encapsulate the totality of experience. This failure is another communication problem. They mention deletion, distortion, and presuppositions or expectations not based on fact. Much of modern

cognitive therapy is based on these ideas. Clearly there are many ways that children and adults can misunderstand at this superficial level without even taking into account children's cognitive immaturity. However, there are deeper mechanisms at work as well.

Bowlby was a psychoanalyst who adapted Freud's theory of defense against anxiety to attachment styles [1980, p61-74; 139]. Freud and his followers delineated several defenses including denial, repression, splitting, projection and sublimation, that acted at an unconscious level to ward off anxieties caused by early, primitive and conflictual emotions and desires. Bowlby added to Freud's causes of anxiety that are caused by a sense of insecurity. These 'deeper' avoidances of facing the reality of one's internal world are considered to occur in everyone although the fewer there are, the better that person is able to function satisfactorily in their social world.

All these possibilities of miscommunication and of avoidance of reality prevent, at an individual level, the possibility of determinism. On the other hand, they can result in individuals experiencing difficulties because their representations fail to reflect the reality of the social world.

People who maintain a secure attachment style are not only able to translate their experiences into representations that have fewer distortions and a lesser need for defenses they will also, because of their ability to cope better with the results of their self-reflection and with the criticism of others, be able to correct some of their misrepresentations and adjust others to be more in line with their real life experiences. They will, in fact, be in a position to act as virtuous citizens, if they so desire.

### *9.5.3. Change Through Exploration*

Securely attached individuals, as I have earlier shown, are more likely to seek change through exploration, curiosity and experimentation. In this way people mature and gain in wisdom and knowledge. The changes made to their social behaviour if sustained over time, will lead to reorganization in the groups of which they are members- families, work groups, social groups.

Another angle from which to examine the stability/change dimension is the proposition Reiss [1981] puts forward. He considers the family paradigm to be, at least in the short-term, stable. This stability arises because the paradigm is considered by family members to have:

1. An objective quality, that is be real or true;
2. A consistency or internal logic; and
3. A stability in the face of constant change. [p21]

The explanations provided by the paradigm are an all encompassing view of reality which cannot sustain an opposing point of view. They are only challenged by the power of “independent regard”, that is, by some outsider who the family agree has some authority or by decree such as a doctor’s orders. To this extent the family beliefs and assumptions that make up the paradigm are stable and determined. The family’s response to a challenge by an outside authority may be to:

1. Explain away the authority’s reaction;
2. To convince the authority of their personal explanation; and
3. Find a new explanation that fits for both. [pp189-190]

So changes to the family paradigm usually only occur during periods of family reorganization after a crisis. The example given earlier of the family with a mentally handicapped child shows the enduring nature of the paradigm.

On the other hand, the environment-sensitive family is defined as one which is open to experience, prepared to delay decisions to allow the contemplation of a number of alternatives and to creatively imagine different solutions. It is the family type that is flexible in response to change. This is a family that can cope with change both from within (for instance, as a result of a child growing into a teenager) and can change when required in response to outside requirements [Reiss, 1981, p40].

Stern in *The Motherhood Constellation* [1998] provides a model to explain the way the “lived experience” of the baby in its relations with the world becomes “represented experience”. These representations come to form a network of “schemas-of-being-with” and are then “evoked or enacted experiences” under the influence of memories, fantasies and self-narratives [pp93-95]. In other words, increasingly generalized abstract patterns are discovered and used by the growing child to guide him/her in new situations. Stern also explores how the hopes, fears and desires of each parent contribute to their relationship behaviour. Mental schemas are representations of relationships. He suggests that the parent has mental “schemas-of-being-with” themselves, each other, their own parents, their families of origin, any substitute parental figures they may have had, cultural or historical events that they only know by hearsay and their fantasizes and

wishes for their child, some based on family myths and legends. The subjective reality on which these representations are made has been the person's experiences seen through the lens of the unique dimensions of the family paradigm, strengthening the imprinting of these dimensions on the infant's psyche. [pp21-34] Here Stern is invoking a model that encompasses conscious and unconscious factors that guide a person's parenting. Each parent is unique. There is plenty of scope for difference.

Finally, Reiss [1995] proposes that in most families the individual members have a genetic make-up that tends the individual towards conformity to social norms of the family. However, some individuals may be predisposed to nonconformity. Such discrepancies between the genetic make-up within a family may then lead to raising adults who have beliefs differing from those of the prevailing socio-political ideology.

The balance between stability and change, in the individual, in the family and in society at large, is in constant tension rather like a tightrope walker who has to constantly be on the move to maintain balance. It is my belief though, backed by the research findings already presented, that the degree of continuity of beliefs from infancy to adulthood is sufficient to warrant my thesis that an early secure relationship can, in favourable circumstances, lead to a 'good' citizen.

### **9.6. Conclusions**

I have, in this chapter, traced the assumptions and belief systems of a society to those of the individual member and back again. I have argued that families are vital interpreters, maintainers and transmitters of cultural norms but that there is flexibility and looseness in the system that prevents a strong determinism.

In Chapter 4 I described the research undertaken by Putnam [1993] in Italy. He found connections between democratic government and the strength of the social capital within the community. When people were engaged with their community whether it be through membership of sporting clubs, or choirs or just chatting in street cafes, there was more likelihood of a system of governance that was open, honest and responsive to the community. If this linkage is bi-directional it follows that the more citizens who are engaged with their community and who value democratic ideals, the less fragile will be the democracy in that society. [p161-185]

I have provided evidence that people's family life and their child rearing practices and values are intimately interwoven with the social values and governing system of their community. A society that values and supports openness, tolerance, trust and friendliness is one where Reiss's [1981] environment-sensitive family and Baumrind's [1993] authoritative family can flourish. Parents in such families are more likely to be capable of the sensitive, responsive parenting that is the seed bed for securely attached offspring. These parents are also likely to have ethical values and to use disciplinary techniques that lay the ground work for their children's development into well-functioning, healthy adults who can take their place in society as ethically responsible citizens.

Viewed from the opposite pole of citizens influencing their society, it can be claimed that the more ethically responsible citizens there are within a nation/state the more likely there will also be families with an authoritative mode of child rearing, families that are environmentally sensitive and individuals and families that support and help maintain a democratic government.

Australian writers agree that society and the individual are reciprocally connected. Wark writes about culture to the effect that "...our ethical decisions depend on the company we keep as much as visa versa." [1997, p50] Raynor talks about the reciprocal relationship between government and citizen in her book *Rooting Democracy: Growing the society we want* [1997]. Finally, Gaitta, a philosopher, cites Mathew Arnold in saying that:

"All the love of our neighbour, the impulse toward action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it- motives eminently such as are called social- come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part." [1999, p229]

## **PART 3**

In which the argument is finally brought together, research proposals made, and the application of the thesis to social policy, education and clinical work reviewed.

## **CHAPTER 10. LINKS BETWEEN ATTACHMENT AND CITIZENSHIP**

### ***10.1. Introduction***

In these final chapters I will bring together, for comparison, the attributes of a ‘good’ citizen, developed earlier in thesis, and the attributes of secure adults, the research of which has been already cited, with the attributes other research has identified in altruistic adults also mentioned previously. Before doing so I develop the discussion of trust and belonging which has been a continuing theme throughout the thesis. Trust and belonging have been considered in earlier chapters both from their importance to citizenship and from their connections to attachment theory. In Chapter 3 I identified trust as being an important element in modern society by promoting cohesion, collaboration and a sense of order. I introduced the fact that trust develops within family life, a fact I have enlarged on in the chapters discussing attachment. Here I will extend the discussion to argue that there are definite links between attachment, trust and citizenship. I will now argue that there could be a theoretical connection between these concepts. This link would need to be investigated empirically. I make some suggestions about how such research could be performed.

Having argued that there are good reasons to believe that there could be a relationship between the proportion of individuals within the Australian population who developed a secure attachment style in infancy and those who are ‘good’ citizens, in the final chapter I will turn to consider what empirical research could be used to test these proposals. The final chapter will also deal with the effect my hypothesis, if proven, might have on social policy, clinical practice and teaching.

### ***10.2. Attachment and Trust***

I have argued previously that trust is an important ingredient in the make up of a ‘good’ citizen. In this section I want to explore the relationship between the civic trust required by a citizen and the trust we all recognize in our interpersonal relationships.

The dictionary definition of trust uses words such as dependable, reliance, confidence. These words are so closely woven together that they are used to define each other. Within psychological and developmental literature trust is rarely defined, perhaps it is considered that its meaning is self-evident. Erickson, whose first developmental stage is



trust v mistrust, states that "The general state of trust...implies not only that one has learned to rely on the sameness and continuity of the other providers, but also that one may trust oneself and the capacity of one's own organs to cope with urges.." [1950, p239] Winnicott who also considered the early infant-mother relationship important, used trust to mean "...the building up of confidence based on experience, at the time of maximal dependence..." [1971, p102]. While Holmes, also discussing the parent-child relationship seems to understand basic trust to be the expectation within the unhappy infant that he will be responded to and his unhappiness resolved [Holmes, 1996, p31]. Misztal, from a sociological perspective, defines basic trust as confidence in our personal identity continuing and elementary trust as the predictability of daily encounters [1996, p90-91]. Both are assumptions that the self and its world are patterned rather than chaotic. She goes on to write that trust, ontological security (by which I take her to mean an awareness of security at a basic level of being), and the feeling of the continuity of things and persons remain closely bound up with each other in the adult personality. Giddens explains that trust relations can be understood in terms of the formation of social bonds - emotionally charged ties of dependence with other people. These bonds, he said, are established with early caretakers and leave resonances affecting all close social relationships formed in adult life. [1991, pp38-42]

Rotter has provided the clearest definition of trust, in this case interpersonal trust, when he is quoted as writing "...trust is a general expectation in that the others' word, promise or statement can be relied on..." [in Feist, 1998, p340]. According to Baier [1986] trust is "...the phenomenon we are so familiar with that we scarcely notice its presence and its variety, is shown by us and responded to by not only with intimates but with strangers or even declared enemies (e.g., asking directions in a foreign city and expecting them to be appropriate, falling asleep on trains or planes, buying food, not being fired on when we lay down our arms)." She goes on to say that "When I trust another I depend on her goodwill towards me. One leaves others the opportunity to harm one when one trusts." She suggests that the progress of consciousness of trust moves from an initial unselfconscious trust to awareness of risk along with confidence that it is a good risk, to some realization why we are taking this risk and eventually some evaluation of what we may generally gain and lose from one's willingness to take such risks.

These various understandings have common features:

1. There is an expectancy;
2. That someone (including oneself) will act or not act;
3. To the benefit of oneself;
4. That this expectancy persists over time; and
5. That unless signaled by a discrepancy, the sense is out of awareness most of the time.

Trust, then is an optimistic stance. A trusting person starts with the position that people will be trustworthy until proven otherwise, while a mistrustful person begins cynically assuming everyone is a rogue. We rely on each other all the time. We rarely wonder if the roof will collapse trusting the builder and owner to have erected it and maintained it properly. We anticipate that the other driver will stop, give way, etc. In these and other ways we put our well being in someone else's hands. Trust involves a sense of being able to rely on someone to provide something that is important to you, for example space to do your own thing, to cooperate on a task, to keep to the rules. From this point of view trust is a feeling about a relationship that may or may not be accompanied by rationally considered evidence. There are, I suggest, three areas of social life in which trust plays a part:

- The persistence and fulfillment of the natural and moral social order;
- The level of technical competence that another performs their role (e.g., a doctor or engineer, a parent or teacher); and
- The belief that the other will do their duty to place your interest before their own when they have an obligation and responsibility to do so.

Children learn to trust through the regular repetition of sequences in which a carer acts to the benefit of the child, and as a result, the child builds an expectation that will continue to occur, each time rewarded by the benefit that ensues. Gradually the expectation becomes a habit of thought or rather a mental working model. Erickson in describing this process said that "Mothers create a sense of trust in their children by that kind of administration which in its quality combines sensitive care of the individual baby's needs and a firm sense of personal trustworthiness within the trusted framework of their culture's lifestyle." [1950, p241] Sensitive parenting and parents who are

already secure in themselves are the factors that contribute to a securely attached infant as has previously been explained.

Trust is also a major component of the attachment relationship between parent and child. Attachment has to do with relationships; relationships that have some ties that bind over time. Security means to be free from fear. The possibility of freedom from fear in a relationship that continues over time implies:

- some predictability about the behaviour of each participant;
- that when they interact there is reciprocity; and
- that actions are dependent on each other.

In other words, the parent and child are in a dance together where each knows the steps. More than this, in infancy at least, there is the readiness to lead and to be led; a new step taken by the child or a new activity suggested by the parent can be ventured in the belief or trust that the other will accept and follow. This way creativity and growth occurs within the attachment relationship space. The abilities to trust others and to be trustworthy oneself are outcomes of secure attachment. Secure attachment is a predictable, positive relationship that is available at times of danger for emotional support. Such a relationship gives confidence in, belief in, a reliance on the parent which, over time can lead to a generalization of this trust to other people. The relationship between infant and parent is a reciprocal one. Where the relationship is good, it is mutually satisfying and provides an oscillation between giving and receiving that may also generalize to interdependent trust (i.e., trusting and being trustworthy). Edwards [2002] notes that “A secure attachment provides children with sense of basic trust in their caretakers and safety in their environment.”

James [1996] points to an increasingly abstracted world and that as nations are formed as societies they become dominated by “...relations of disembodied integration.” If this is the case, only the more mature mind will be in a position to generalize this trust to the abstract institutions of state and nation. Certainly, adults will use their rational thinking of particular situations to modify their readiness to trust or not to trust. That is, it becomes increasingly rational and cognitive. Recently in a survey of primary school children, Hogan [1999] notes that trust levels rise in line with school achievement but that the top quartile is less trusting than the third quartile. The bright children have

begun to evaluate the risks in trusting and start being more prudent in their relationships. This seems to provide evidence of Baier's [1986] idea of progression of risk assessment. Mikulincer [1998] examined the association between adult attachment style and the sense of trust in close relationships. His findings show that secure people feel "...more trust toward their partners, showed a higher accessibility of positive trust-related memories, reported more positive trust episodes over a 3-week period, and adopted more constructive strategies in coping with the violation of trust than insecure persons." He speculates that, although trust is often considered a relationship-specific process, "...people are...likely to have a more stable trust orientation.." and that "...this trust orientation is central to the attachment working model of others." It is perhaps, this trust orientation that is measured when trust is studied as an entity separate from trust in a particular relationship.

It will be necessary to back this hypothesis with research to discover empirically if there is a correlation between a secure attachment style and a trusting and trustworthy orientation in an individual. One method would be to assess different groups of people with Rotter's interpersonal trust questionnaire and with a separate assessment of attachment style. I anticipate that there would be a correlation between secure attachment style and a high level of interpersonal trust.

### **10.3. Forms of Trust**

I have already alluded to the fact that various authors divide trust into differing forms. Latham [1997], for example, speaks of horizontal and vertical trust to differentiate between trust in personal relationships and trust in institutions and governments. Others describe 'impersonal' trust and 'social' trust which are used to indicate the trust given to strangers, banks and hospitals, and similar institutions [e.g. Giddens, 1991, p38]. In most respects these forms of trust are similar to Latham's vertical trust. Many authors talk of basic trust and ontological security to describe the generalized belief or expectancy that the world and oneself can be trusted to be more or less safe and at least neutral if not benevolent [e.g. Baier, 1986; Misztel, 1996; Paxton, 1999].

Forms of trust known as institutional, political or vertical however are less easy to define. Trust or confidence in institutions is a rather vague concept. What does it mean to trust an institution such as the government, social security, police? Does it mean that

you believe that these institutions are functioning for your benefit? Certainly, I would not trust an agency I thought was corrupt or self-seeking. Is there a difference between the trust you place in an organization when you prioritize your own needs, perhaps believing them to be desperate to trusting an organization that you expect to distribute its resources fairly, equably and taking into account different levels of urgency of need?

There are, at least, two features that this type of confidence displays:

1. A negative aspect that the agency is not too oriented towards its own internal concerns, for example, their budget, shareholder profit, personal gain (financial, political, etc.). When there are competing agendas a person's relationship with the agency may determine their level of trust. For instance, a shareholder may trust a company to maximize dividends while a customer may be distrustful of the same company believing it is cutting corners to their detriment; a government minister may trust a head of department to bring it in on budget while a client may feel suspicious that their concerns are not being taken seriously; an employer may be trusted by a bank to repay a loan while an employee may be fearful of dismissal if profits don't ensue. However, a person in their role as a citizen as opposed to that of client, customer, etc., would expect the institution to perform its proper function and to do this with regard to the public good.
2. A second feature of institutional trust is related to whether the institution can actually fulfill its assigned tasks when they are needed. That a hospital will treat you when you are ill; an emergency service will operate when required; a bank will honour its debts; etc.. These services, local, regional and national, can be seen to be performing. They are monitored by the media. When deficient, complaints are made by individuals and groups. This feature of trust has a very rational aspect to it compared with the hopes and expectations related to the first aspect discussed where the confidence in authoritative institutions may be connected to our tendency to trust those in authority based on our childhood experiences. Research questionnaires should, therefore, be modified to distinguish between institutional and interpersonal trust which may discriminate between the different forms of trust and the different styles of attachment.

Impersonal, institutional, social or vertical trust may require a modicum of that basic trust initially founded in the parent-child relationship but it clearly requires only a

minimal degree as children and adults who are classified as insecure in their close relationships can nevertheless function adequately in most spheres of their lives. The more intellectual, rational aspect involved in impersonal trust is, the more it surely requires an understanding, through experience in the social world outside the family, of the rules that govern society's commerce, communication and social interactions. It appears to me that societies vary in the levels of trust individuals place in the unknown, or partially known, other. In some societies it pays to be wary, suspicious or even dishonest while the fear of being misused is less common in other social groups. There is, then, a gradient between societies where it is usual to expect to trust and to feel safe in one's daily interactions to those in which distrust is in the ascendancy.

This possibility has been investigated by Bergman [2002]. He examined the differences in compliance in paying taxes between Chile and Argentina. The study, he states, "...proves that trust and perceptions of institutional performance are among the most consistent variables that explain commitment to comply." In Chile trust in the institution is higher than in Argentina and the Chileans pay their taxes more readily.

Newton [2001] discusses social trust which he said "...is a- probably the- main component of social capital, and social capital is a necessary condition of social integration, economic efficiency, and democratic stability (Arrow, 1972, 357; Coleman, 1988, 306; Ostrom, 1990; Putman, 1993, 1995, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995)." He criticizes the survey questions used to assess trust suggesting that they "...evaluate the trustworthiness of the world they (i.e. the subjects) live in..." rather than their "...dispositions" or, as I call it, their trust orientation. Newton differentiates social trust from political trust. Social trust he defines as confidence in institutions and differentiates it from trust in politicians and particular governments. Political trust "...is not an expression of a basic feature of 'trusting personalities', but an evaluation of the political world." In his research Newton has compared whole societies and their collective levels of trust. His findings suggest that "...healthy stocks of political capital cannot be built up in nations lacking social capital (Brazil, Romania, Argentina), but political capital can dwindle rapidly in countries, such as Finland, with well developed social capital." Since Newton has connected social trust with social capital it is evident that both social trust and political trust are valuable in citizens. Newton identifies two different forms of trust out of those usually lumped together under terms such as

impersonal, vertical or institutional trust. This analysis has similarities to the analysis I presented above on institutional trust. His distinction between a trust relationship and a trust orientation is a valuable insight. It is presumably the orientation that is internalized on the basis of experiences in relationships that are trusting or otherwise.

I propose to consider trust in two dimensions:

1. Personal or interpersonal trust- the belief that family and friends can be trusted to be supportive and helpful; and
2. Impersonal or institutional trust- the belief that fellow citizens, though unknown to me, will not act towards me with malevolence, that they can be relied on to act with fairness, honesty and within the law of the state; that major institutions and regulators can be trusted to act fairly and responsibly. This form is similar to Newton's social trust noted above.

The first form develops through the attachment processes as I argued in section 10.2. The dimensions of personal trust parallel those of security of attachment. The second, impersonal trust, may partly develop through family belief systems as described previously and partly from our experiences later in life. There appears to be a dearth of research that has explored the possibility of such links. It is an area of future work.

The connection to one's society or nation involves a sense of belonging and it is to that I now turn.

#### ***10.4. Citizens and Belonging***

Belonging is a feature of relatively closed groups. Belonging is one way people identify with a group and define its boundaries. By belonging to a nation state a citizen identifies with that state and recognizes its members from strangers. In Chapter 3 I noted that research has found that many people regard belonging as the most important criterion of citizenship while I have noted in Chapter 9 that attachment and belonging are linked through their origin in family life. In this section I will further explore the connections between trust and belonging, both of which are partly cognitive and partly emotional.

Hagerty et al [2002] examined the potential childhood antecedents of an adult sense of belonging. They studied 362 community college students ranging in age from 18 to 72 years, with a mean age of 26 years. Significant positive antecedents of a relationship with sense of belonging were perceived to be: caring by both mother and father while

growing up; participation in high school athletic activity; and parental divorce. Although attachment was not investigated, the research shows the co-relation between parenting and belonging.

Belonging has rational and non-rational aspects which I hypothesize develop from infant attachment. Thus both belonging and trust stem from an early childhood amalgam of instinct and feeling states to become, in adulthood, overlain by rationalization, habit and learning. With this maturation they can be used in broader, differing social contexts.

Misztal considers trust is constructed through a feeling of belonging together in a shared common fate and common enterprise [1996, p217]. In other words, the sense of belonging, of being together, is present prior to trust developing. It is the bedrock on which trust is built. The beginnings of such a construction start with the early child-parent relationships and family life. Basic trust as developed in the attachment relationship, is the foundation to these developments. In quoting Giddens [1992], Misztal considers trust is built up by “..opening ourselves to others, it has to be negotiated and bargained for.” [p90] What I am arguing for here is that belonging, like trust, is built on and developed from a basic expectation of others originating at a non-rational, unconscious level. This sense of belonging to a nation is already present in Grade 2 children according to Hess [1967]. Ralston Saul points out that “There is personal love and there is civic belonging. Both feed into each other.” He continues to describe love as “..something which links us to another and thus to memory, because it is shared.” It is possible, I would suggest, to read attachment for personal love. Ralston Saul continues his argument “Belonging then to a place, community, nation, state is part of the same process, but the result of different roles.” [2002, p261]

Belonging is the sign and symptom of being included which initially arises in early relationships. Belonging to a nation is the attribute of citizens, but if trust does not arise, or is destroyed, the sense of belonging may also be damaged. This possibility needs further investigation, however, the intimate connection between trust and belonging remains probable.

The results of the Australian portion of an international study on citizenship reported by Pakulski [2000] are interesting. Citizens were divided into three categories: civic and nationalistic, both displaying “strong attachments”; and cosmopolitan with “weak



attachments” to a nation. It was noted that nationalistic citizens were older, less well educated, and had not lived abroad while civic and cosmopolitan citizens tended to be younger, with a university degree, secular rather than religious and had usually lived abroad. There was found to be a higher proportion of civic citizens in “settler” countries such as Australia, Canada and USA; in secular countries; and in countries with highly developed economies (Australia: 38% civic; 30% cosmopolitan). I contend that citizens will usually activate their specific attachment style when considering their relationship with their state/nation. Thus a person who displays a limited attachment style as an adult would deny attachment, loyalty or a sense of belonging. They will be ‘weakly attached’. A preoccupied person would show fervent loyalty on the one hand, while being highly derogatory at other times, perhaps even critical of those who fail to fit their rather rigid ideas of patriotic behaviour. A citizen with a balanced, secure attachment style may be more dispassionate in their judgments and while maintaining a sense of belonging, may be able to move beyond the limits imposed by nationalistic views. Citizens classified by attachment style overlap with the citizen types of nationalistic, civic and cosmopolitan noted above. The preoccupied and nationalistic groups are similar. Nationalistic citizens are said to feel they belong to a “people” while civic citizens belong to a “society”. The balanced person fits the latter category. The cosmopolitan citizens may be a mixed grouping of people with limited and balanced attachment styles.

The growth of nationalism was a 19th century phenomenon [Australian Citizens for a New Century]. Civic citizenship may have been a form of citizenship for a small elite for some time, however, perhaps it has only been since the postwar years that the values of tolerance of difference, even the usefulness of difference; and of international as well as national compassion have been lauded as ideals for all of society to strive for. These are the features of civic citizenship. Thus, it is possible that in a milieu where nationalism was the norm and the appropriate way to belong (belonging involves a commonality), a secure child would become an active if, hopefully, rational nationalist whilst a less secure individual might be a more fervent and extreme patriot, less able to tolerate outside influences. We have learnt that nationalism has its dark side which can be modified by the adoption of the values of civic citizenship. In this changed intellectual climate it is more likely that secure young people will be drawn to this view

while the less secure will cling to the older nationalistic values which seem more stable and secure.

I have argued that there are theoretically valid reasons to expect strong connections to exist between citizenship, trust and belonging. I can now return to the questions of the linkage between ‘good’ citizenship, secure attachment and altruism as presented in the introduction to the chapter.

### 10.5. Comparisons

Table 10.1 is a comparison of the attributes of adults who in their childhood were favoured by a secure relationship with their parent(s), the attributes of adults who grew up in homes where there were many demonstrations of responsible, ethical and altruistic behaviour and where the child was expected to conform to these ethics, and of the attributes of a ‘good’ citizen as laid out in Chapters 3 and 4.

<i>‘Good’ Citizens</i>	<i>Secure Adults</i>	<i>Altruistic Adults</i>
Belong	Social skills	Socially Responsible
Responsible	Autonomous	Obligated
Active		Helpful, caring
Ethical:	‘Naturally’ ethical	
Compassionate		Compassionate
Empathic	Empathic	Empathic
Tolerant		
Respect		Respect
Justice		
Cooperative		
Self-worth, self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem
Self reflective	Self reflective	
	Self reliant	Self reliant
		Self efficacious
Imaginative	Creative	
Trustful	Trustful	

*Table 10.1. Comparison of Citizen and Adult Features*

In this table I have used the words employed by the authors reviewed in these chapters that characterize a ‘good’ citizen. The attributes of secure adults are discussed in

Chapter 7 and that of altruistic adults in Chapter 8. The characteristics itemized are those used by the various researchers whose studies I have cited.

As can be seen, there are many similarities between these groups. While there are many factors that must be taken into account when trying to explain these similarities, I have argued earlier that parenting is one of the most important. In this thesis I have reviewed much of the research to back the hypothesis that parenting is an important factor in the development of security and of morality. There are three linkages that need to be considered:

1. Is there a correlation between individuals who exhibit a secure attachment style and those who espouse a virtuous or altruistic stance? This question explores the links between columns 2 and 3 in Table 10.1.
2. Is there a correlation between people who exhibit the features of a 'good' citizen and those who exhibit as adults a secure attachment style? This question compares columns 1 and 2 in Table 10.1.
3. Are there particular parental characteristics and techniques that contribute to the development of these 'good' citizens?

For these questions to be answered, further research is required. Chapter 11 will consider some of the ways such research could be conducted.

### ***10.6. Security and Citizenship***

The links between the three columns in table 10.1 that I will pursue concern the connections between secure attachment style as an adult and citizenship as well as the continuity of the secure attachment style from infancy to adulthood. This latter issue has been argued in earlier chapters, however here, I will lay out a theoretical model of development that attempts to show the links between childhood socialization and adult citizenship attitudes and behaviour.

Secure attachment allows an individual adult or child to feel secure and to engage in exploration. In Table 10.1 I have diagrammed the way these two factors influence the different aspects of citizenship. Within the secure space afforded by a secure attachment style the relationship with the "other" can be explored, the roles the self plays as it acts in the social arena can be examined and the beliefs and values the individual uses can be

investigated. This introspective work occurs constantly as the child matures into adulthood.

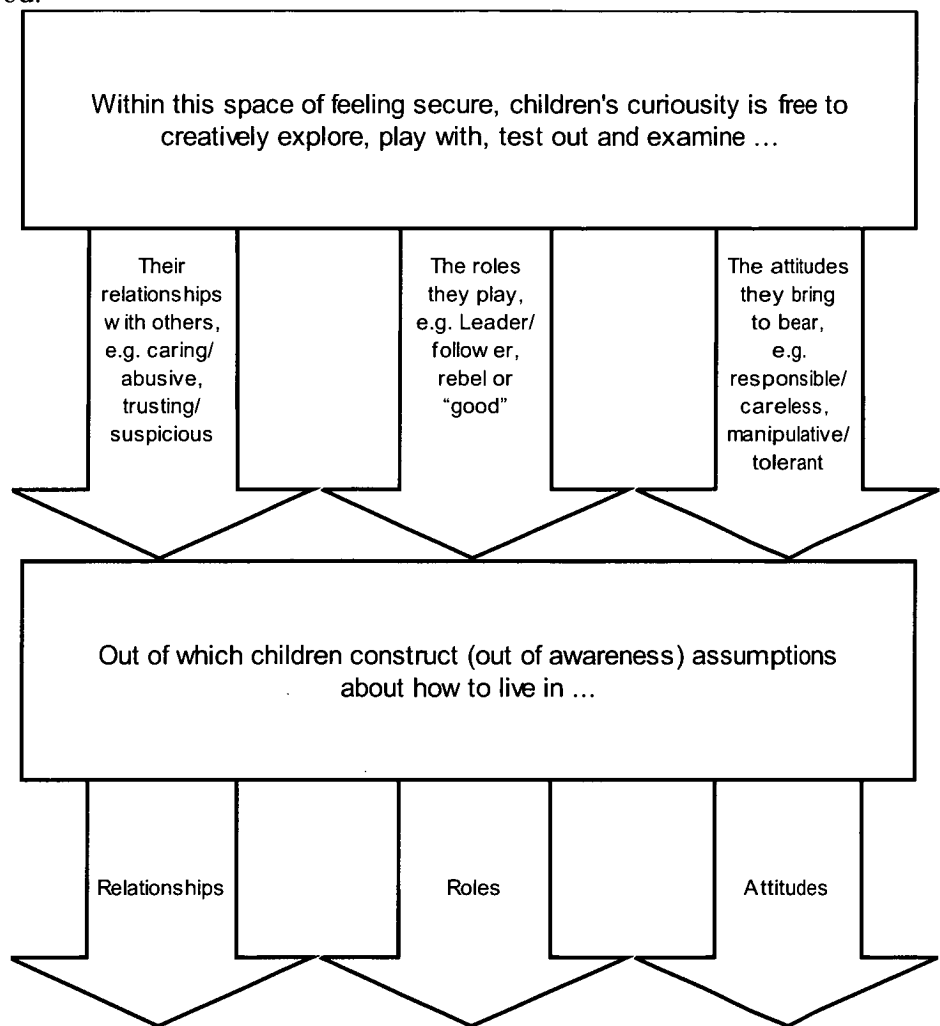
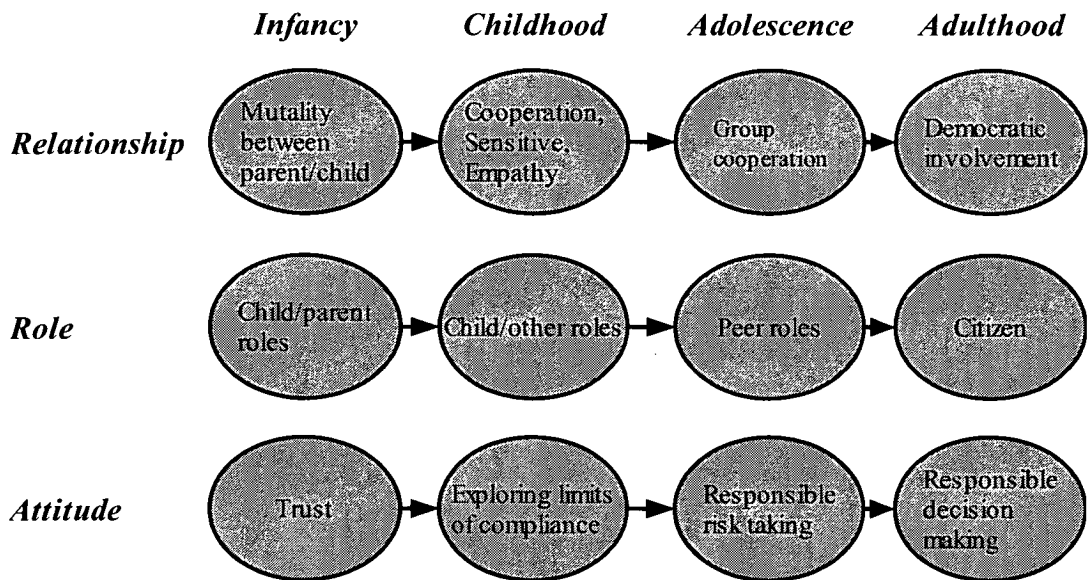


Figure 10.1. The link between security and assumptions

Felt security permits exploration of the relationship with others, of the roles the individual plays in their social world and of the attitudes they bring to bear on that world. This exploration allows the construction of more or less realistic assumptions of their world. As I pointed out in earlier chapters, the less secure individuals are proportionately less able to utilize their introspective moments constructively.

In figure 10.1. I propose a model to show the routes taken in each of the facets of citizenship, that is relationships, roles and attitudes, as the securely attached infant grows to maturity. Each facet interacts with the others working together to construct the whole citizen when the time comes. Thus the child cooperates and finds empathy with

other people (teachers, coaches, leaders and friends) while exploring the limits to their freedom. Later the adolescent finds new uses for the cooperation and empathy they learnt in infancy in the groups and gangs of peers in which they spend some of their time. The trust they gained in infancy is now available to assist them in taking risks, and in further exploration of limits, but this time with a degree of caution as they weigh up the risks involved.



*Figure 10.2. Development of Relationships, Roles and Attitudes*

From these diagrams it is suggested that democratic citizenship is founded on a trusting and mutual relationship that has its origins in the relationship between parent and infant. In the following 10.3. this parent-infant relationship is shown providing the initial attachment pattern which in the primary childhood years becomes embedded as a relationship style. Adolescence brings the beginnings of reworking that style and the values the individual has until then taken for granted. This introspection continues into adulthood. Both in adolescence and adulthood, however, the original beliefs about the self and the world usually seem so inbuilt that it is only under strong social pressure that significant changes are made.

Attachment is linked, therefore, to parental nurturing of the infant and growing child on the one side, and on the other to the development of beliefs about the world, self and relationships that I have previously connected to the attributes of citizenship.

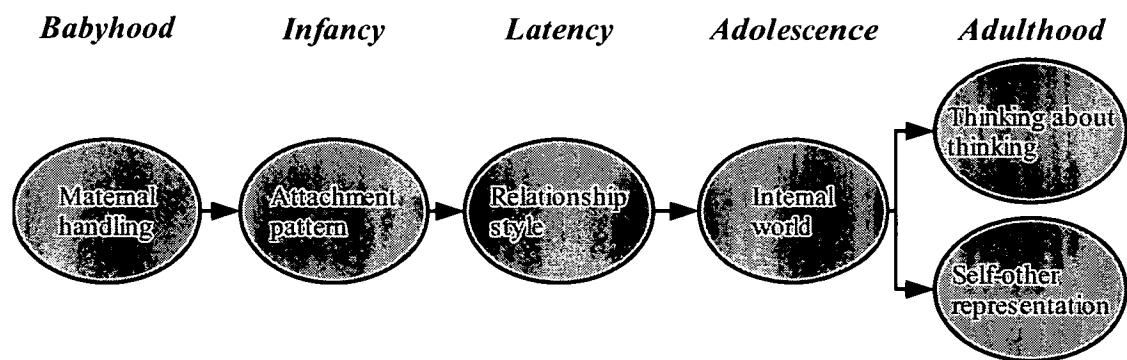


Figure 10.3 Development of Attachment linked to representations of self in the world

Somewhat similar to the above Figure 10.3 is the table I reproduce below from Duckett [2001].

<i>Socialization</i>	<i>Personality</i>	<i>World view</i>	<i>Motivational goal</i>	<i>Ideological beliefs</i>
Punitive vs Tolerant	Conforming vs Autonomous	Threatening/ dangerous vs Safe/secure	Social control/ security vs Personal freedom	Authoritarian/ conservative vs Autonomy/ openness
Unaffectionate vs Affectionate	Tough-minded vs Tender-minded	Competitive jungle vs Cooperative- harmony	Superiority and dominance vs Altruistic concern	Social dominance vs Egalitarian- humanism

Table 10.2. Duckett’s Table IV

Duckett’s [2001] paper deals with a theory of ideology and prejudice, nevertheless the theory he presents is applicable to the more positive aspects of citizenship. As he said “Although it was not explicitly explored here, these dynamics would also have relevance for explaining those social and inter group attitudes and behaviours associated with resistance to oppression, discrimination and injustice.” The two dimensions, illustrated in his table set out above, show affectionate socialization which could be equated with a socialization that provided a secure attachment and tolerant socialization that has similarities to Baumrind’s [1984] authoritative style of parenting which I discussed in Chapter 9. The central features of Duckett’s model are socialization and world views which are also central features of my thesis. Duckett’s research studies produced evidence that was consistent with his theoretical model.

The figures 10.1, 10.2. and 10.3. summarize the hypothesized development pathway of the infant to the adult citizen, who, with this beneficial beginning and ongoing ‘good enough’ nurturance, is likely to have the attributes required of an ethically responsible citizen. These attributes would include felt connection to his/her community that is positive, the adoption of a role as an active, involved citizen, and an attitude towards that relationship and role that includes a sense of responsibility and duty, a compassion for others and an ability to consider issues from the perspective of the common good rather than simply out of personal gain. This hypothesis also requires testing. Such research would examine citizens who exhibit ‘good’ qualities and those who do not and compare the upbringings of these different groups.

A link between ‘good’ citizenship and secure attachment has, I believe, some theoretical validity although there is little empirical research at present to back it up. One of the few pieces of research to explore this field was carried out by Feshbach in 1991. It is useful to present it in some detail as it illustrates the difficulties associated with this type of research that crosses disciplinary boundaries.

Feshbach, as noted in my opening literature review in Chapter 1, explored “..the proposition that the attachment displayed toward one’s nation or culture bears fundamental similarities to the attachment displayed by the young child to his parents.” He distinguished between patriotism, nationalism and internationalism as follows:

- Patriotism- love of country e.g., I love my country; In a sense I am emotionally attached to my country and emotionally affected by its actions;
- Nationalism- National superiority and domination; and
- Internationalism which has similarities to Pakulski’s civic citizen [2000].

There appears to me some doubt that the questionnaire Feshbach employed would produce similar results in a small to middle power such as Australia, where national superiority may be less obvious than in the USA, the predominant world power.

The attachment scales he used are equally problematic. The survey of young adults used a questionnaire relying on memory. Feshbach recognizes this difficulty and notes that the research is only exploratory. An even more serious problem is the use of strong v weak attachment as opposed to secure/insecure. It is very unclear what a strong attachment is or what it means to have strong attachment needs. In the text the author

mentions both emotional dependence and excessive attachment but whether these are what is meant by strong attachment is not stated. I suspect that the author has conflated dependence and attachment with the result that the research does not bear on the relation between secure attachment and patriotism. In my view, a strong attachment could indicate an ambivalent attachment, while a weak attachment might suggest an avoidant attachment, but both could also include some securely attached individuals. Later work by Main [1985] using the AAI has shown that idealization of childhood and denial of childhood problems can occur in insecure individuals. Insecure infants are more likely to develop dependency relationships later in life.

Feshbach used a questionnaire to assess the dependency/attachment to the father and mother as adults. High scores on this would then suggest that the individual remained insecure. Correlations found were between an early strong attachment to mother and inversely to internationalism and world government. This could suggest people display more empathy, maturity, tolerance if weakly attached. It is hard to understand this finding but in light of the problems with definition it is impossible to unravel. On the other hand an early childhood strong attachment to father was correlated to patriotism. In discussion the author suggests that the relation of strong father attachment and patriotism might have to do with pride, that is questions that tapped pride in one's country rather than love for one's country correlated with early father attachment. This illustration points to the problems of research which I will discuss further in the concluding chapter.

### **10.7. Summary**

In this chapter I have brought together the two sides of my thesis and put forward a theoretical base for the connections between them. Where possible I have brought forth empirical evidence to support that theory. I have argued that:

1. The features of a 'good' citizen have a fair degree of overlap with the features of a securely attached adult.
2. Previous chapters have presented the evidence to back the claim that these common features are more likely to occur in individuals who have been able to develop a secure attachment relationship with a parent in infancy.
3. It is argued that a trusting orientation and a sense of belonging are both important features of 'good' citizenship and that these attitudes and motivating forces are



promoted by secure attachment to a parent as an infant. There is some empirical evidence to support this claim.

Certainly these hypotheses are unsubstantiated or only partly proven by research studies. In particular, the following claims are vulnerable and require verification or refutation by future research.

- The sense of trust and confidence (a trusting orientation) that is created by the secure attachment generalizes to people beyond immediate family and intimates.
- And the sense of belonging is linked to the attachment style.

The concluding chapter will consider research possibilities and discuss the effects on social policy, clinical work and teaching should my conclusions be considered sufficiently well argued to be worth acting on.

## **CHAPTER 11. CONCLUSIONS AND THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE**

### ***11.1. Introduction***

The second part of this thesis, that is Chapters 5 to 9, examined the evidence and argued that a secure attachment starts an infant on a development path that is likely to lead to an adult who is self-confident, sociable, realistic, has a high self esteem (Chapter 7) and is empathic/sympathetic, can control his/her own behaviour as necessary, and maintains a moral code that influences his/her behaviour under a reliable conscience or sense of oughtness (Chapter 8). Evidence also points to one of the reasons for some continuity of behaviour during growth and developmental change being because values and beliefs about self and others have some stability.

To nurture these favoured children, I conclude from the evidence presented in these chapters that:

1. Parents are an important medium through which to influence the next generation's development. (Chapter 6)
2. Parents who are sensitive and nurturing are more likely to maintain relationships with their children that engender their sense of security and trust. (Chapter 5)
3. Parents are more able to carry out these tasks if they, themselves, feel secure in their current life situation. (Chapter 5)
4. The parents' value systems and disciplinary techniques affect the values and social behaviour of their children. (Chapter 8)
5. Children whose parents use an authoritative style and who also espouse values that stress thoughtfulness of others and personal responsibility are likely to incorporate similar values as their own. Children who have a secure attachment style more readily incorporate these values. (Chapters 7 and 8)
6. A social climate that also promotes these values provides a favourable environment for such families to flourish. But, even if the social climate is less favourable families can still nurture children with the appropriate moral and behavioural standards and their social influence will not be negligible. (Chapter 9)

I laid out certain propositions in the introduction. My thesis rests on having shown that these propositions, while not proven beyond reasonable doubt, are nevertheless more

likely than not to be valid and so act as a useful set of criteria on which to base social action. The propositions that relate to Chapters 5-9 are:

1. That infant attachment is a fundamental aspect of development, and is also a strong determinant. (Chapters 5-9)
2. That the way infants cope with this survival requirement (attaching oneself to a care giving adult) in the particular situation into which they are born provide standards by which future relationships are dealt with and judged. Even though these standards may be modified and the repertoire of behaviours the individual can utilize expands, and even though the outcome in a particular case cannot be predicted, tendencies can be observed that show a moderate degree of stability from infancy onwards of the style people use in their relationships. It is, therefore, possible for statistical norms to be of value when considering whole social groups. (Chapters 6-9)
3. That while 'attachment' styles vary widely there are sufficient regularities to classify them into 3 or 4 groupings. Each group has a stability across time and initially begins to 'jell' in the patterns of the infant-parent relationships. (Chapter 5)
4. That some styles are more likely to be present in individuals who function well in their lives. They can 'absorb more shocks' than others. The 'secure' or 'balanced' style appears to be the most resilient. (Chapters 5 and 7)
5. That people who feel they have a safe and secure base both within themselves and within their social network are freer to investigate their world, consider the needs of others as well as themselves and develop creative solutions to the physical and social problems they encounter. (Chapters 5 and 7)
6. That this robust secure style will have a greater ability to handle changing situations, will be more able to explore these situations and guide the future towards appropriate outcomes and will be more able to take into consideration the welfare of others and the whole picture. (Chapter 7 and 8)
7. That while attachment is a firm foundation to the development of a fully functional adult, it is, on its own, insufficient to ensure with any confidence the development of a 'good' citizen. Two further factors are important:
8. A family climate with appropriate moral and ethical standards. (Chapter 8)

9. A set of world views shared by the family that enable rational, autonomous and reflective action in the social sphere thesis. (Chapter 9)

The two other propositions were considered in Part 1 of the thesis and in Chapter 10:

10. The attributes of a 'good' citizen were noted (part 1) and compared with those found in part 2.

11. The link between attachment and citizenship was spelt out.

In Chapter 2 I defined citizenship in terms of a relationship, a role and an attitude. In part 2 I argued that our relationships, roles (including rebellious or active change agents), and our attitudes have been founded on infant attachment and modified by family and outside cultures. A secure infant attachment interacting with the family's culture, and later that of the outside social world, form the basic stuff out of which adult citizens relate, take on an attitude (value system) toward their fellow citizens and state and pursue roles within that society. At the same time, the culture sets the limits within which we make our relationships and apply our values. A reciprocity exists so that the individual can play a part in changing the politics and culture of the society of which they are part.

A secure attachment may not be the only cause or even a necessary cause, yet it is, I contend, a sufficiently important factor in the making of an ethically responsible citizen to use as an assumption on which to base the rest of the thesis. It is an important enabling cause.

The final chapter in a thesis is the place where the future is considered. If the arguments put in the previous chapters are convincing and the hypotheses put forward considered worth pursuing, it is now time to discuss how research could further enlighten the subject and help to confirm or reject the hypotheses of this thesis. Further than that, the concluding chapter traditionally discusses the way the hypothesis might modify social policy, clinical and educational practice. I will pursue all these themes in this chapter. First though, I want to begin by revisiting the concept of a 'good' citizen.

The idea of a 'good' or ideal citizen presupposed that such an individual lives in or aspires to live in a 'good' society. What constitutes a 'good' society will, in all likelihood, differ among people. I have put forward some evidence that trust, cooperation, tolerance and a sense of belonging are valuable for society to function

efficiently. The awareness of some responsibility to one's fellow citizens seems a corollary to these attributes. The ability to reflect on one's own biases and prejudices seems a requirement if one is to be convincingly tolerant. Care, empathy and concern for others seems necessary if problems of inequality, injustice, and exploitation are to be resolved. Despite this, I am sure that other people would define the features of a 'good' citizen differently, prioritizing some features and omitting others.

There is a need for a public debate around the questions about the kind of society we want in Australia and the types of citizens who would inhabit such a society. Sociologists, social researchers and social psychologists could aid this debate by investigating the public's views.

### **11.2. Research Possibilities**

In this segment I will indicate some of the issues and challenges that surround this interdisciplinary research. I will do this by considering some of the assessments that are currently available as well as suggesting modifications or different approaches.

Below are the questions that research might consider and the answers the research would need to support if my hypothesis was to be confirmed :

Does secure attachment in infancy indeed lead to a balanced or secure attachment in adulthood?	Yes, a high proportion of securely attached infants will become secure, balanced adults. Research findings related to this question have been presented earlier but more longitudinal studies are required to replicate those studies already published.
Does the individual with a secure, balanced adult attachment style have characteristics that equate with those of a 'good' citizen?	Yes, The features of securely attached adults match the features of 'good' citizens. However, as I have indicated previously, the definition of a 'good' citizen is loose, perhaps too loose to allow rigorous research. An Australian research project similar to Bellah's "Habits of the Heart" [1985] might provide a basis for further studies to test this hypothesis.

## Nurturing Citizens

Is parenting in infancy more important for the development of a 'good' citizen than later input from parents, schools or other groups?	Yes, the parental influence that promotes secure attachment in their infants is more likely to lead to the development of 'good' citizens than where this influence is not present. Some research presented earlier strongly supports the contention that parental behaviour is an important factor in infant attachment while the rest of this hypothesis is dependent on the two previous ones being found to be correct.
Can families assist children to develop into 'good' citizens in the face of an indifferent or hostile social climate?	Possibly though the particular kinds of families that can accomplish the task of producing pro social individuals in a hostile environment is unclear. This hypothesis requires further investigation. The Oliners' [1988] work with altruistic people might be extended to explore in greater detail the parental practices and infant attachments in these special individuals.
Does it in fact matter if there is or is not an increase in the percentage of 'good' citizens in a nation?	Yes, the greater the number of securely attached adults the more likely it is that the nation will espouse democratic principles, provide a satisfying life for its citizens and promote a caring, concerned approach to problems facing the world community. Again there is some research support for this hypothesis examined earlier but more is necessary to confirm these findings.

A number of research possibilities exist which could help to test these hypotheses. There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration when planning such research. They include:

1. The size of the sample and control group against which to contrast the results; and

2. The assessment tools utilized. These need to be pertinent to the goals of the research, in this case that of obtaining information about the participants' attachment styles and citizenly qualities (e.g. trusting or otherwise, altruistic or self-indulgent, active or passive, etc.). Assessments also need to have been validated in other studies and against other measures. It is to some of the assessments available that I will now address some remarks.

Leaving the contribution of genetics to one side, the attachment relationship plays a central role in the hypotheses of this thesis. Research, then, requires some assessments of attachment style, of beliefs, of citizenship behaviours and/or of the participants' altruistic qualities. The study most able to decide the value of secure attachment would be a longitudinal study with a large population; testing in infancy for infant attachment style and in mid-adulthood for citizenship attitudes and activity. This type of longitudinal study requires many years before results can be obtained, although there may be such studies already underway that could be utilized. Some of the longitudinal studies that follow up people who in infancy were examined using an attachment assessment are coming to fruition. It would be possible for these studies to administer some investigations of their present citizenship behaviour. Otherwise we would need to rely on interviewing adults using less robust methods.

Research could be carried out using the following methods:

1. Intensive interviews with a smaller number of individuals to determine the relationship, if any, between the attachment styles, their beliefs and the citizenship behaviour they display.
2. Population surveys could be used to elicit the level of certain citizenship features within a community and the proportion of the population showing secure attachment styles. If a correlation is found after a number of surveys in different population groups a degree of significance may be noted. A refinement of such a population survey would determine the levels of impersonal and basic trust within different societies. A correlation may exist between them and the political and historical factors in each particular population. This is a subject I have pursued in appendix 1 [MacKenzie, 2002].

I have introduced some of the assessments available for classifying attachment styles in earlier chapters. There are several psychological assessments that purport to measure

self-esteem, empathy, prosocial behaviour, personality traits and self-reflectiveness which are beyond the scope of this thesis to assess. A battery of such tests would be a formidable undertaking for both the participant and the researcher. Here, however, I will concentrate on outlining a few more general tests that might be of use although each test has its drawbacks.

One such investigation would involve assessing the individual's world views. This will provide information about the person's beliefs about trust in others and in the institutions of democracy, in their beliefs about the reasonableness of the social world and so the possibility of intervening in it in a useful way and their belief in the value or otherwise of their interventions. I have shown earlier in this thesis the importance of one's world views as a factor in one's behaviour.

Reiss's family paradigm was done in a laboratory setting using a card-sort method involving the whole family [1981]. This approach does not seem applicable to individual adults where personal rather than family beliefs would be examined. Research on individual beliefs about the social world and their place in it has a long history. There are a number of psychological tools which have been constructed to assess personal constructs, locus of control and attributions [Paterson et al, 1982].

In Chapter 7 I introduced Kelly's personal construct theory. Kelly postulates "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" [Feixas, 1990]. These ways of anticipation become the personal construct. Following similar lines are the concepts of learnt helplessness [Munton, 1985] and attribution theory [Munton & Antaki, 1988] which examines the beliefs people formulate about the causes of another's behaviour. Thus there are a number of psychological assessments already available that might meet the requirements in this area.

Another approach would be to use the survey tools utilized by Pakulski [1999]. The results of his research can be hypothesized to be linked to attachment styles. I will now explain this idea. To this end I shall remind readers of the AAI discussed previously.

The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) was first published by Main in 1985. It is one of the research tools that could be used to investigate the attachment style of the individual adult. As noted earlier, Main and her colleagues classified their results under three headings: limited, preoccupied and balanced. These categories have parallels with the



infant attachment classifications of avoidant, ambivalent/anxious and secure. They may be two sides of a coin of the attachment/caregiver relationship. I contend that citizens will usually activate the attachment side of this relationship when considering their relations with their nation/state. To reiterate my earlier suggestions:

- A person who displays a 'limited' attachment would deny an attachment, loyalty or a sense of belonging;
- A 'preoccupied' person would show fervent loyalty on the one hand but be highly derogatory at other times, perhaps critical of those who did not fit their rather rigid sense of patriotic behaviour; and
- A 'balanced' citizen may be more dispassionate in their judgments and while maintaining a sense of belonging, may be able to move beyond the limits imposed by nationalistic views.

There is some overlap with the citizen types suggested by Pakulski [1999]. The hypothesis that citizen types and attachment styles are connected could be further researched. The narrative concept used in the AAI could be an appropriate method of investigating how people experience their citizen role as I will now explain. The AAI involves an interview focusing on an individual's current representation of his/her childhood experiences including early child-parent relationships, separations, illnesses, rejections, losses and maltreatment. The interview is rated on a number of scales concerning the experiences and state of mind as reflected in the narrative [Fonagy, 1999]. A similar narrative could be elicited by creating questions that tapped the person's citizenship representations. The assessment could be named the Citizen Attachment Interview. Such questions might include, for example:

- What experiences have you had, positive or negative, that have influenced how you feel about being Australian?
- How would you describe your feelings about being an Australian?
- What effect have your experiences had on your readiness to participate as a citizen of Australia? and
- What makes a good Australian?

As with the AAI this narrative could then be assessed for its depth or superficiality, its idealization and/or denigration of the country and its culture, its coherence, passivity, unresolved negative affect, etc. I anticipate that a classification of citizen narratives

would correlate with the person's adult attachment style as determined by the AAI. My thesis would suggest that:

- The 'limited' group would give a superficial account of their citizen experiences with generalizations, denial of or minimalization of traumatic episodes including a lack of coherence between events and emotions.
- The 'preoccupied' group's narrative would be characterized by passivity, unresolved affect, inconsistency and contradictory reports.
- While the 'balanced' group would give a coherent story that recognized the positive and negatives of the culture/country and an awareness of the various emotions that such an account would engender.

The question of a possible link between the security of attachment in close relationships and the maturity of their thinking about their country could be explored by the 'Citizen Attachment Interview'.

Trust is another important quality in citizens. There are several ways of approaching the investigation of trust. Paxton [1999] provides an example that highlights some of the difficulties. She distinguishes basic trust from institutional trust. In her survey she uses questions about people's helpfulness, fairness and trustworthiness to assess individual trust and questions about confidence in organized religion, the education system and federal government (in the USA) to assess institutional trust. I have argued that the questions used by Paxton may not be tapping the levels of trust within the community. These questions have also been criticized by others [Newton, 2002].

Questions that might better tap a citizen's trust in institutions could include:

- Are politicians, on the whole, primarily interested in the public good or are they more concerned about other things such as personal gain?
- Do you think schools try to do their best for all children or are they more interested in things like gaining credit for the school? and
- Do you consider public hospitals treat everyone with equal respect or do some people (e.g. aboriginals, migrants, the mentally ill) not get the service they should?

These questions are designed to explore the hopes people have that their expectations will be fulfilled, which is a more focused definition of trust than Paxton's questions provide.

In summary, the intensive investigation using a small number of cases could include the AAI, the Locus of Control or similar assessment to tap the person's attributions, and an assessment of the person's citizen attitudes which could be a questionnaire similar to that used by Paxton [1999] or the 'Citizen Attachment Interview' suggested above. These tests could provide information about each person's attachment style as an adult, their sense of belonging, trust, responsibility and active involvement but further investigations would be needed to assess their pro social and altruistic qualities such as empathy, compassion, cooperativeness and respect.

Surveys involving large populations would necessitate the use of questionnaires rather than interviews. For cross-cultural studies the questionnaire needs to be translatable and validated in the target countries. A number of questionnaires of adult attachment have been developed and used in a number of countries [Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Simpson & Rhodes, 1998]. This fact may be important in research within Australia where there are many different ethnic and local cultures. However none of these questionnaires give results fully comparable with the AAI [Sroufe, 2002]. Questionnaires that tap citizenship qualities include those noted above by Pakulski and Paxton. It may be necessary to construct specific ones to suit the research envisaged.

It is clear that more research is important if my hypothesis is to be proven however this research is not without challenges.

### **11.3. Social Policy Issues**

Eastman [1989] in her book *Family: The vital factor* spelt out the research that showed families were important for the intellectual development, the health and the social competence of their children. She goes on to protest that despite the family's importance it is ignored by policy makers. Eastman claimed that in Australia in 1989 the family's role as an educator was ignored, the links between poverty and family well-being were denied and there was a lack of resources to assist families to support each other and to rear their children. I would suggest that little has changed since 1989.

Social policy affecting parent-child and family issues is driven by immediate political forces rather than concern for the future of society or society's need for more active citizens. Prevention of mental ill-health or of antisocial behaviour is an increasingly recognized goal of social policy. Infant well-being is one focus for such preventive

measures [Fonagy, 1998]. If, as many believe, parental sensitivity has some effect on the attachment relationship between parent and child and if the social milieu that surrounds the first few years of life has some bearing on the future citizen then social policies could be enacted that favoured factors that might increase the number of 'virtuous citizens' who may be able to manage the future more satisfactorily than we have managed to do up to now. Fonagy identifies several programmes that are currently operating that target parents and particularly attachment relationship. Many of these programmes are targeted at risk groups. Applying the same principles to normal populations might achieve an even greater benefit for the welfare of the community if they can increase the proportion of securely attached people in society. It should be understood that since the attachment relationship tends to solidify between the ages of nine months to eighteen months, that this is a period that is as important if not more important than the earlier months of a child's life and than later periods. Policies need to reflect this fact.

Other policies that could be considered in the light of the focus on child rearing to achieve secure attachment would be maternal (and paternal) leave, flexible working hours for parents with young children, improved childcare facilities and family sensitive practices in all walks of life.

A policy area that is also of importance is that of research funding. I suspect that there is little interest in funding research into the development of citizenship. If the analysis of many commentators is right, that democracy is under threat and that both as a nation and as a member of the world community we face serious challenges, then it would be important that the state encourages research in this field.

Citizenship has usually been considered as that part of one's life that is lived in the public realm in contradistinction from the private life of the family. I would suggest a 'good' parent is functioning as a 'good' citizen by attempting to nurture a child who is given the right foundations to develop into a 'good' citizen him/herself. When parenting is viewed as an aspect of citizenship, a different understanding of the obligations, responsibilities and goals of parenting is possible both for the parent themselves and for the society of which they are part.

Another vital issue arising out of the importance of the infant attachment relationship is the issue of gender. Up to this point in my thesis I have used parenting in a relatively gender neutral manner. This has been somewhat artificial considering that most of the research on which the thesis is based have used mothers rather than fathers. McKie et al [2001] note that Walby [1994] asked the question “..is citizenship gendered?” They continue by citing her suggestion that “..family care work was a major barrier to women’s full citizenship both in terms of women’s participation in the public arena and in terms of the state’s lack of action to facilitate and value care work.” It is not the purpose of this thesis to debate the issues around the gendering of caring and parenting. However, parenting is a vital part of a nation’s continuity and regeneration. The primary carer needs the support of others, usually other family members, to fulfill her/his nurturing task. While the family remains a valuable resource to the primary carer, policies need to consider the effect on the whole family as well as the relationship between infant and primary carer.

### **11.4. Clinical Issues**

The application of this thesis’s argument to the clinical field would suggest the prioritizing of treatment and preventative measures for parents and their babies and infants. Clinical psychological and psychiatric practices are rarely involved with infants though infant mental health is a growing discipline. Usually the public seeks the help of general practitioners and paediatricians. While an awareness of the importance of the attachment process to infant well-being is increasingly recognized, the training of all these professions needs to stress its importance. Training in the treatment of families who are experiencing infant-parent difficulties need to be prioritized and expanded. Families need to be helped to understand that while no one is at fault, nor is the problem a reflection of a lack in the parents, professional assistance at an early stage in the life of the child may be preventive of later difficulties. Follow up of families over the first few years may also be a useful preventive strategy especially to assist the parents to move from unconditional sensitivity in early infancy to a more authoritative stance in the preschool years.

Providing a secure base for your child to explore is an important function of the family. Where the family finds this difficult to provide, outside support may be required. Sometimes the support needed is financial or material. This support would be the

province of government and welfare authorities. Emotional and relational support is also a common necessity to give parents the feelings of security they themselves need. Friends and lay volunteers may be able to provide this support in some cases. Others will require costly long term work by well trained and supervised staff. Despite its expense, such assistance is probably cost effective in the long run.

There are clear indications that the style of attachment exhibited by the parent tends to be transmitted to the infant. In one study 80% of the securely attached mothers measured prior to delivery had securely attached infants at 18 months [Fonagy, Steele & Steele, 1991; see also review of other studies in Van Ijzendoorn, 1995]. There is also evidence that people can change from an insecure attachment to a more secure one either by “earning” their security through positive life circumstance or through clinical treatment [Pearson et al, 1994]. Case finding and case work with insecurely attached adults before they have a family could be a useful and cost effective way to increase the number of securely attached infants within the community.

### ***11.5. Educational Issues***

If my thesis is accepted it implies that its findings should be promulgated widely within the community. Politicians, policy makers, professional caregivers and educationalists are the first that would need to be educated about the importance of attachment. Beyond that circle of social leaders, education about parenting’s value to the community, about the benefits of infants having a secure base from which to grow, about the need for children to learn an appropriate moral code could be provided in schools, in ante natal classes, and in university courses, especially in those leading to medical, nursing, psychological, social work and teaching degrees.

Finally, Edwards [2002] suggests a set of parenting processes associated with the development of interdependence in their children. She considers interdependence as the central goal of parenting because “..a democratic nation needs an interdependent citizenry who are not only competent but who also can live together cooperatively with an eye toward what will benefit the whole as well as the self.” The basis for this goal is the development within the child of a secure attachment which is “..absolutely necessary, but insufficient.” There may be other guides for parents that seek to guide children to become ‘good’ citizens.

### **11.6. Final Summary**

Within psychology, sociology, medicine and psychiatry theory and research have concentrated on pathology. We seek to prevent or cure the ill health or dysfunctions of society, family or individual. We attempt to mend shattered minds, to soothe troubled families, to mitigate alienation and to right social wrongs. These are important, heartfelt tasks but they obscure, within these professions at least, the improvements to functioning, to well-being that can be made for and by already well functioning people, families and societies. Some would complain that progress in these human, as opposed to technological fields, is utopian and that such progress has been condemned by its own history and the current post-modern ideologies. It has ties to eugenics, to manipulation and to brainwashing. True, as with technological advances, there are positive and negative consequences to the introduction of anything new or different. These have to be weighed and assessed continually, yet we move forward albeit with circumspection.

A wider objective for Australia would be to increase the proportion of Australian citizens who displayed the socially useful trait of a readiness to participate in the political debates about major issues facing Australia and the World; issues such as poverty, corruption, environmental degradation, genetic engineering, and democracy, and who bring to these debates a willingness to cooperate, to show consideration of others, compassion and an ability to reflect on one's own prejudices and beliefs. The question of how to increase the number of 'good' citizens within Australian society which I posed at the beginning of this thesis is a contribution to this endeavour.

I have argued that a secure attachment in infancy and some continuity of a secure base for the child into primary years may indeed lay a foundation for these valuable citizenly qualities, especially if the child is brought up in an environment that models and teaches an appropriate world view and a moral sense. I have suggested ways this hypothesis could be tested in the field and given examples of how parents could rear their children towards this end and how they could be encouraged to do so. I recognize that this simplified, reductionist approach does not do justice to the full picture of social development, yet it may provide a working hypothesis which can be the basis for further investigation and, perhaps policy recommendations.

The human world is fragile and vulnerable. We can improve the chances for future generations to live in peace and prosperity if we can rear our children to be citizens who can act cooperatively toward that goal.



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